



3 1761 06836512 1

LAYS OF
ANCIENT ROME

6





Presented to the
LIBRARY *of the*
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
by
The Estate of the late
PROFESSOR A. S. P. WOODHOUSE
Head of the
Department of English
University College
1944-1964



With his harness on his back,
Plunged headlong in the tide.

Wootton

Lays of
Ancient Rome

BY
LORD MACAULAY

T. Nelson & Sons

PR
4963
A7
1908



1043772

CONTENTS.



PREFACE	3
HORATIUS	55
THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS	99
VIRGINIA	163
THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS . . .	213
THE BATTLE OF MONCONTOUR. .	245
IVRY	248
THE ARMADA	256
THE BATTLE OF NASEBY . . .	264
SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD . .	271
EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE . . .	278

PREFACE.

THAT what is called the history of the Kings and early Consuls of Rome is to a great extent fabulous, few scholars have, since the time of Beaufort, ventured to deny. It is certain that, more than three hundred and sixty years after the date ordinarily assigned for the foundation of the city, the public records were, with scarcely an exception, destroyed by the Gauls. It is certain that the oldest annals of the commonwealth were compiled more than a century and a half after this destruction of the records. It is certain, therefore,

4 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

that the great Latin writers of the Augustan age did not possess those materials, without which a trustworthy account of the infancy of the republic could not possibly be framed. Those writers own, indeed, that the chronicles to which they had access were filled with battles that were never fought, and Consuls that were never inaugurated; and we have abundant proof that, in these chronicles, events of the greatest importance, such as the issue of the war with Porsena, and the issue of the war with Brennus, were grossly misrepresented. Under these circumstances, a wise man will look with great suspicion on the legend which has come down to us. He will perhaps be inclined to regard the princes who are said to have founded the civil and religious institutions of Rome, the son of Mars, and the husband

of Egeria, as mere mythological personages, of the same class with Perseus and Ixion. As he draws nearer and nearer to the confines of authentic history, he he will become less and less hard of belief. He will admit that the most important parts of the narrative have some foundation in truth. But he will distrust almost all the details, not only because they seldom rest on any solid evidence, but also because he will constantly detect in them, even when they are within the limits of physical possibility, that peculiar character, more easily understood than defined, which distinguishes the creations of the imagination from the realities of the world in which we live.

The early history of Rome is indeed far more poetical than anything else in Latin literature. The loves of the Vestal and

6 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

the God of War, the cradle laid among the reeds of Tiber, the fig-tree, the she-wolf, the shepherd's cabin, the recognition, the fratricide, the rape of the Sabines, the death of Tarpeia, the fall of Hostus Hostilius, the struggle of Mettus Curtius through the marsh, the women rushing with torn raiment and dishevelled hair between their fathers and their husbands, the nightly meetings of Numa and the Nymph by the well in the sacred grove, the fight of the three Romans and the three Albans, the purchase of the Sibylline books, the crime of Tullia, the simulated madness of Brutus, the ambiguous reply of the Delphian oracle to the Tarquins, the wrongs of Lucretia, the heroic actions of Horatius Cocles, of Scævola, and of Clœlia, the battle of Regillus won by the aid of Castor and Pollux, the defence of Cremera, the

touching story of Coriolanus, the still more touching story of Virginia, the wild legend about the draining of the Alban lake, the combat between Valerius Corvus and the gigantic Gaul, are among the many instances which will at once suggest themselves to every reader.

In the narrative of Livy, who was a man of fine imagination, these stories retain much of their genuine character. Nor could even the tasteless Dionysius distort and mutilate them into mere prose. The poetry shines, in spite of him, through the dreary pedantry of his eleven books. It is discernible in the most tedious and in the most superficial modern works on the early times of Rome. It enlivens the dulness of the Universal History, and gives a charm to the most meagre abridgments of Goldsmith.

Even in the age of Plutarch there were

8 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

discerning men who rejected the popular account of the foundation of Rome, because that account appeared to them to have the air, not of a history, but of a romance or a drama. Plutarch, who was displeased at their incredulity, had nothing better to say in reply to their arguments than that chance sometimes turns poet, and produces trains of events not to be distinguished from the most elaborate plots which are constructed by art.* But though the existence of a

* "Υποπτον μὲν ἐνίοις ἔσθ' τὸ δραματικὸν καὶ πλασματώδες· οὐ δεῖ δὲ ἀπιστεῖν, τὴν τύχην ὀρώντας, οἷων ποιημάτων δημιουργός ἐστι.—*Plut. Rom. viii.* This remarkable passage has been more grossly misinterpreted than any other in the Greek language, where the sense was so obvious. The Latin version of Crusenius, the French version of Amyot, the old English version by several hands, and the later English version by Langhorne, are all equally destitute of every trace of the meaning of the original. None of

poetical element in the early history of the Great City was detected so many years ago, the first critic who distinctly saw from what source that poetical element had been derived was James Perizonius, one of the most acute and learned antiquaries of the seventeenth century. His theory, which, in his own days, attracted little or no notice, was revived in the present generation by Niebuhr, a man who would have been the first writer of his time, if his talent for communicating truths had borne any proportion to his talent for investigating them. That theory has been adopted by several eminent scholars of our own country, particularly by the Bishop of St. David's, by Professor Malden, and by the lamented Arnold. It appears to be

the translators saw even that *ποίημα* is a poem. They all render it an event.

10 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

now generally received by men conversant with classical antiquity ; and indeed it rests on such strong proofs, both internal and external, that it will not be easily subverted. A popular exposition of this theory, and of the evidence by which it is supported, may not be without interest even for readers who are unacquainted with the ancient languages.

The Latin literature which has come down to us is of later date than the commencement of the Second Punic War, and consists almost exclusively of works fashioned on Greek models. The Latin metres, heroic, elegiac, lyric, and dramatic, are of Greek origin. The best Latin epic poetry is the feeble echo of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The best Latin eclogues are imitations of Theocritus. The plan of the most finished didactic poem in the Latin tongue was taken from

Hesiod. The Latin tragedies are bad copies of the masterpieces of Sophocles and Euripides. The Latin comedies are free translations from Demophilus, Menander, and Apollodorus. The Latin philosophy was borrowed, without alteration, from the Portico and the Academy; and the great Latin orators constantly proposed to themselves as patterns the speeches of Demosthenes and Lysias.

But there was an earlier Latin literature, a literature truly Latin, which has wholly perished, which had, indeed, almost wholly perished long before those whom we are in the habit of regarding as the greatest Latin writers were born. That literature abounded with metrical romances, such as are found in every country where there is much curiosity and intelligence, but little reading and writing. All human beings, not utterly

12 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

savage, long for some information about past times, and are delighted by narratives which present pictures to the eye of the mind. But it is only in very enlightened communities that books are readily accessible. Metrical composition, therefore, which, in a highly civilised nation, is a mere luxury, is, in nations imperfectly civilised, almost a necessary of life, and is valued less on account of the pleasure which it gives to the ear, than on account of the help which it gives to the memory. A man who can invent or embellish an interesting story, and put it into a form which others may easily retain in their recollection, will always be highly esteemed by a people eager for amusement and information, but destitute of libraries. Such is the origin of ballad-poetry, a species of composition which scarcely ever fails to

spring up and flourish in every society, at a certain point in the progress towards refinement. Tacitus informs us that songs were the only memorials of the past which the ancient Germans possessed. We learn from Lucan and from Ammianus Marcellinus that the brave actions of the ancient Gauls were commemorated in the verses of Bards. During many ages, and through many revolutions, minstrelsy retained its influence over both the Teutonic and the Celtic race. The vengeance exacted by the spouse of Attila for the murder of Siegfried was celebrated in rhymes, of which Germany is still justly proud. The exploits of Athelstane were commemorated by the Anglo-Saxons, and those of Canute by the Danes, in rude poems, of which a few fragments have come down to us. The chants of the

14 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Welsh harpers preserved, through ages of darkness, a faint and doubtful memory of Arthur. In the Highlands of Scotland may still be gleaned some relics of the old songs about Cuthullin and Fingal. The long struggle of the Servians against the Ottoman power was recorded in lays full of martial spirit. We learn from Herrera that, when a Peruvian Inca died, men of skill were appointed to celebrate him in verses, which all the people learned by heart, and sang in public on days of festival. The feats of Kurroglou, the great freebooter of Turkistan, recounted in ballads composed by himself, are known in every village of Northern Persia. Captain Beechey heard the Bards of the Sandwich Islands recite the heroic achievements of Tamēhameha, the most illustrious of their kings. Mungo Park found

in the heart of Africa a class of singing-men, the only annalists of their rude tribes, and heard them tell the story of the victory which Damel, the negro prince of the Jaloffs, won over Abdulkader, the Mussulman tyrant of Foota Torra. This species of poetry attained a high degree of excellence among the Castilians, before they began to copy Tuscan patterns. It attained a still higher degree of excellence among the English and the Lowland Scotch, during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. But it reached its full perfection in ancient Greece, for there can be no doubt that the great Homeric poems are generically ballads, though widely distinguished from all other ballads, and indeed from almost all other human compositions, by transcendent sublimity and beauty.

16 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

As it is agreeable to general experience that, at a certain stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should flourish, so is it also agreeable to general experience that, at a subsequent stage in the progress of society, ballad-poetry should be undervalued and neglected. Knowledge advances : manners change : great foreign models of composition are studied and imitated. The phraseology of the old minstrels becomes obsolete. Their versification, which, having received its laws only from the ear, abounds in irregularities, seems licentious and uncouth. Their simplicity appears beggarly when compared with the quaint forms and gaudy colouring of such artists as Cowley and Gongora. The ancient lays, unjustly despised by the learned and polite, linger for a time in the memory of the vulgar, and are

at length too often irretrievably lost. We cannot wonder that the ballads of Rome should have altogether disappeared, when we remember how very narrowly, in spite of the invention of printing, those of our own country and those of Spain escaped the same fate. There is indeed little doubt that oblivion covers many English songs equal to any that were published by Bishop Percy, and many Spanish songs as good as the best of those which have been so happily translated by Mr. Lockhart. Eighty years ago England possessed only one tattered copy of *Childe Waters* and *Sir Cauline*, and Spain only one tattered copy of the noble poem of the *Cid*. ✓ The snuff of a candle, or a mischievous dog, might in a moment have deprived the world for ever of any of those fine compositions. Sir Walter

18 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Scott, who united to the fire of a great poet the minute curiosity and patient diligence of a great antiquary, was but just in time to save the precious relics of the Minstrelsy of the Border. In Germany, the lay of the Nibelungs had been long utterly forgotten, when, in the eighteenth century, it was, for the first time, printed from a manuscript in the old library of a noble family. In truth, the only people who, through their whole passage from simplicity to the highest civilisation, never for a moment ceased to love and admire their old ballads, were the Greeks.

That the early Romans should have had ballad-poetry, and that this poetry should have perished, is therefore not strange. It would, on the contrary, have been strange if these things had not come to pass ; and we should be justi-

fied in pronouncing them highly probable, even if we had no direct evidence on the subject. But we have direct evidence of unquestionable authority.

Ennius, who flourished in the time of the Second Punic War, was regarded in the Augustan age as the father of Latin poetry. He was, in truth, the father of the second school of Latin poetry, the only school of which the works have descended to us. But from Ennius himself we learn that there were poets who stood to him in the same relation in which the author of the romance of Count Alarcos stood to Garcilaso, or the author of the 'Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode' to Lord Surrey. Ennius speaks of verses which the Fauns and the Bards were wont to chant in the old time, when none had yet studied the graces of speech, when none had yet climbed the

20 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

peaks sacred to the Goddesses of Grecian song. 'Where,' Cicero mournfully asks, 'are those old verses now?'

* 'Quid? Nostri veteres versus ubi sunt?

. "Quos olim Fauni vatesque
canebant

Cum neque Musarum scopulos quisquam
superârat,

Nec dicti studiosus erat." ' *Brutus*, xviii.*

The Muses, it should be observed, are Greek divinities. The Italian Goddesses of verse were the Camœnæ. At a later period, the appellations were used indiscriminately; but in the age of Ennius there was probably a distinction. In the epitaph of Nævius, who was the representative of the old Italian school of poetry, the Camœnæ, not the Muses, are represented as grieving for the loss of their votary. The 'Musarum scopuli' are evidently the peaks of Parnassus.

Scaliger, in a note on Varro (*De Lingua Latina*, lib. vi.), suggests, with great ingenuity, that the Fauns, who were represented by the superstition of later ages as a race of monsters, half gods and half brutes, may really have been a

Contemporary with Ennius was Quintus Fabius Pictor, the earliest of the Roman annalists. His account of the infancy and youth of Romulus and Remus has been preserved by Dionysius, and contains a very remarkable reference to the ancient Latin poetry. Fabius says that, in his time, his countrymen were still in the habit of singing ballads about the Twins. ‘Even in the hut of Faustulus,’—so these old lays appear to have run,—‘the children of Rhea and Mars were, in port and in spirit, not like unto swineherds or cowherds, but such that men might well guess them to be of the blood of Kings and Gods.’ *

class of men who exercised in Latium, at a very remote period, the same functions which belonged to the Magians in Persia and to the Bards in Gaul.

* Οἱ δὲ ἀνδρωθέντες γίνονται, κατὰ τε ἀξίωσιν

22 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Cato the Censor, who also lived in the days of the Second Punic War, men-

μορφῆς καὶ φρονήματος ὄγκον, οὐ σινοφερβοῖς καὶ
βουκόλοις εὐκότες, ἀλλ' οἷος ἂν τις ἀξιώσει τοῖς
ἐκ βασιλείων τε φήντας γένους, καὶ ὑπὸ θαυμάτων
σπορῶς γενέσθαι νομιζομένους, ὥς ἐν τοῖς πατρίοις
ἔμνοις ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἔτι καὶ νῦν ᾗδεται. — *Dion.*
Hal. i. 79. This passage has sometimes
been cited as if Dionysius had been speaking in
his own person, and had, Greek as he was, been
so industrious or so fortunate as to discover
some valuable remains of that early Latin
poetry which the greatest Latin writers of his
age regretted as hopelessly lost. Such a sup-
position is highly improbable; and indeed it
seems clear from the context that Dionysius, as
Reiske and other editors evidently thought,
was merely quoting from Fabius Pictor. The
whole passage has the air of an extract from an
ancient chronicle, and is introduced by the
words, Κόϊντος μὲν Φάβιος, ὁ Πίκτηρ λεγόμενος.
τῇδε γράφει.

Another argument may be urged which seems
to deserve consideration. The author of the
passage in question mentions a thatched hut
which, in his time, stood between the summit

tioned this lost literature in his lost work on the antiquities of his country. Many of Mount Palatine and the Circus. This hut, he says, was built by Romulus, and was constantly kept in repair at the public charge, but never in any respect embellished. Now, in the age of Dionysius there certainly was at Rome a thatched hut, said to have been that of Romulus. But this hut, as we learn from Vitruvius, stood, not near the Circus, but in the Capitol. (*Vit.* ii. 1.) If, therefore, we understand Dionysius to speak in his own person, we can reconcile his statement with that of Vitruvius only by supposing that there were at Rome, in the Augustan age, two thatched huts, both believed to have been built by Romulus, and both carefully repaired and held in high honour. The objections to such a supposition seem to be strong. Neither Dionysius nor Vitruvius speaks of more than one such hut. Dio Cassius informs us that twice, during the long administration of Augustus, the hut of Romulus caught fire (*xlvi.* 43, *liv.* 29). Had there been two such huts, would he not have told us of which he spoke? An English historian would hardly give an account of a fire at Queen's College without say-

24 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

ages, he said, before his time, there were ballads in praise of illustrious men ; and ing whether it was at Queen's College, Oxford, or at Queen's College, Cambridge. Marcus Seneca, Macrobius, and Conon, a Greek writer from whom Photius has made large extracts, mention only one hut of Romulus, that in the Capitol. (*M. Seneca, Contr. i. 6 ; Macrobius, Sat. i. 15 ; Photius, Bibl. 186.*) Ovid, Livy, Petronius, Valerius Maximus, Lucius Seneca, and St. Jerome mention only one hut of Romulus, without specifying the site. (*Ovid. Fasti, iii. 183 ; Liv. v. 53 ; Petronius, Fragm. ; Val. Max. iv. 4 ; L. Seneca, Consolatio ad Helviam ; D. Hieron. ad Paulinianum de Didymo.*)

The whole difficulty is removed if we suppose that Dionysius was merely quoting Fabius Pictor. Nothing is more probable than that the cabin, which in the time of Fabius stood near the Circus, might, long before the age of Augustus, have been transported to the Capitol, as the place fittest, by reason both of its safety and of its sanctity, to contain so precious a relic.

The language of Plutarch confirms this hypothesis. He describes, with great precision, the spot where Romulus dwelt, on the slope of Mount

these ballads it was the fashion for the guests at banquets to sing in turn while the piper played. ‘Would,’ exclaims Cicero, ‘that we still had the old ballads of which Cato speaks!’ *

Palatine leading to the Circus; but he says not a word implying that the dwelling was still to be seen there. Indeed, his expressions imply that it was no longer there. The evidence of Solinus is still more to the point. He, like Plutarch, describes the spot where Romulus had resided, and says expressly that the hut had been there, but that in his time it was there no longer. The site, it is certain, was well remembered; and probably retained its old name, as Charing Cross and Haymarket have done. This is probably the explanation of the words, ‘Casa Romuli,’ in Victor’s description of the Tenth Region of Rome, under Valentinian.

* Cicero refers twice to this important passage, in Cato’s Antiquities:—‘Gravissimus auctor in Originibus dixit Cato, morem apud majores hunc epularum fuisse, ut deinceps, qui accubarent, canerent ad tibiam clarorum virorum laudes atque virtutes. Ex quo perspicuum est,

Valerius Maximus gives us exactly similar information, without mentioning his authority, and observes that the ancient Roman ballads were probably of more benefit to the young than all the lectures of the Athenian schools, and that to the influence of the national poetry were to be ascribed the virtues of such men as Camillus and Fabricius.*

et cantus tum fuisse rescriptos vocum sonis, et carmina.'—*Tusc. Quæst.* iv. 2. Again: 'Utinam exstarent illa carmina, quæ, multis sæculis ante suam ætatem, in epulis esse cantitata a singulis convivis de clarorum virorum laudibus, in Originibus scriptum reliquit Cato.'—*Brutus*, xix.

* 'Majores natu in conviviiis ad tibias egregia superiorum opera carmine comprehensa pangebant, quo ad ea imitanda juventutem alacriorem redderent. . . . Quas Athenas, quam scholam, quæ alienigena studia huic domesticæ disciplinæ prætulerim? Inde oriebantur Camilli, Scipiones, Fabricii, Marcelli, Fabi.'—*Val. Max.*, ii. 1.

Varro, whose authority on all questions connected with the antiquities of his country is entitled to the greatest respect, tells us that at banquets it was once the fashion for boys to sing, sometimes with and sometimes without instrumental music, ancient ballads in praise of men of former times. These young performers, he observes, were of unblemished character, a circumstance which he probably mentioned because, among the Greeks, and indeed in his time among the Romans also, the morals of singing-boys were in no high repute.*

The testimony of Horace, though given incidentally, confirms the state-

* 'In conviviis pueri modesti ut cantarent carmina antiqua, in quibus laudes erant majorum, et assa voce, et cum tibicine.' Nonius, *Assa voce pro sola.*

ments of Cato, Valerius Maximus, and Varro. The poet predicts that, under the peaceful administration of Augustus, the Romans will, over their full goblets, sing to the pipe, after the fashion of their fathers, the deeds of brave captains, and the ancient legends touching the origin of the city.*

The proposition, then, that Rome had ballad-poetry, is not merely in itself highly probable, but is fully proved by direct evidence of the greatest weight.

This proposition being established, it

* ‘Nosque et profestis lucibus et sacris,
Inter jocosî munera Liberi,
Cum prole matronisque nostris,
Rite Deos prius apprecati,
Virtute functos, more patrum, duces,
Lydis remixto carmine tibiis,
Trojamque, et Anchisen, et almæ
Progeniem Veneris canemus.’

becomes easy to understand why the early history of the city is unlike almost everything else in Latin literature, native where almost everything else is borrowed, imaginative where almost everything else is prosaic. We can scarcely hesitate to pronounce that the magnificent, pathetic, and truly national legends, which present so striking a contrast to all that surrounds them, are broken and defaced fragments of that early poetry which, even in the age of Cato the Censor, had become antiquated, and of which Tully had never heard a line.

That this poetry should have been suffered to perish will not appear strange when we consider how complete was the triumph of the Greek genius over the public mind of Italy. It is probable that, at an early period, Homer and

30 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Herodotus furnished some hints to the Latin minstrels;* but it was not till after the war with Pyrrhus that the poetry of Rome began to put off its old Ausonian character. The transformation was soon consummated. The conquered, says Horace, led captive the conquerors. It was precisely at the time at which the Roman people rose to unrivalled political ascendancy that they stooped to pass under the intellectual yoke. It was precisely at the time at which the sceptre departed from Greece that the empire of her language and of her arts became universal and despotic. The revolution indeed was not effected without a struggle. Nævius seems to have been the last of the ancient line of poets. Ennius was

* See the Preface to the Lay of the Battle of Regillus.

the founder of a new dynasty. Nævius celebrated the First Punic War in Saturnian verse, the old national verse of Italy.* Ennius sang the Second Punic

* Cicero speaks highly in more than one place of this poem of Nævius ; Ennius sneered at it, and stole from it.

As to the Saturnian measure, see Hermann's *Elementa Doctrinæ Metricæ*, iii. 9.

The Saturnian line, according to the grammarians, consisted of two parts. The first was a catalectic dimeter iambic ; the second was composed of three trochees. But the licence taken by the early Latin poets seems to have been almost boundless. The most perfect Saturnian line which has been preserved was the work, not of a professional artist, but of an amateur :

‘ Dabunt malum Metelli Nævio poetæ.’

There has been much difference of opinion among learned men respecting the history of this measure. That it is the same with a Greek measure used by Archilochus is indisputable. (*Bentley, Phalaris*, xi.) But in spite of the authority

32 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

War in numbers borrowed from the *Iliad*.^{*} The elder poet, in the epitaph of Terentianus Maurus, and of the still higher authority of Bentley, we may venture to doubt whether the coincidence was not fortuitous. We constantly find the same rude and simple numbers in different countries, under circumstances which make it impossible to suspect that there has been imitation on either side. Bishop Heber heard the children of a village in Beaulieu sing 'Radha, Radha,' to the tune of 'My boy Billy.' Neither the Castilian nor the German minstrels of the Middle Ages owed anything to Paros or to ancient Rome. Yet both the poem of the *Cid* and the poem of the *Nibelungs* contain many Saturnian verses; as—

'Estas nuevas á mio *Cid* eran venidas.'

'Á mi lo dicen; á ti dan las orejadas.'

'Man möchte michel wunder von *Sifride* sagen.'

'Wa ich den *Kunio* vinde daz sol man mir sagen.'

† Indeed there cannot be a more perfect Saturnian line than one which is sung in every English nursery—

'The queen was in her parlour eating bread and
honey;'

which he wrote for himself, and which is a fine specimen of the early Roman diction yet the author of this line, we may be assured, borrowed nothing from either Nævius or Archilochus.

On the other hand, it is by no means improbable that, two or three hundred years before the time of Ennius, some Latin minstrel may have visited Sybaris or Crotona, may have heard some verses of Archilochus sung, may have been pleased with the metre, and may have introduced it at Rome. Thus much is certain, that the Saturnian measure, if not a native of Italy, was at least so early and so completely naturalised there that its foreign origin was forgotten.

Bentley says indeed that the Saturnian measure was first brought from Greece into Italy by Nævius. But this is merely *obiter dictum*, to use a phrase common in our courts of law, and would not have been deliberately maintained by that incomparable critic, whose memory is held in reverence by all lovers of learning. The arguments which might be brought against Bentley's assertion—for it is mere assertion, supported by no evidence—are innumerable. A few will suffice.

34 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

and versification, plaintively boasted that the Latin language had died with

1. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Ennius. Ennius sneered at Nævius for writing on the First Punic War in verses such as the old Italian bards used before Greek literature had been studied. Now the poem of Nævius was in Saturnian verse. Is it possible that Ennius could have used such expressions if the Saturnian verse had been just imported from Greece for the first time ?

2. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Horace. 'When Greece,' says Horace, 'introduced her arts into our uncivilised country, those rugged Saturnian numbers passed away.' Would Horace have said this if the Saturnian numbers had been imported from Greece just before the hexameter ?

3. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Festus and of Aurelius Victor, both of whom positively say that the most ancient prophecies attributed to the Fauns were in Saturnian verse.

4. Bentley's assertion is opposed to the testimony of Terentianus Maurus, to whom he has himself appealed. Terentianus Maurus does

him.* Thus what to Horace appeared to be the first faint dawn of Roman literature, appeared to Nævius to be its hopeless setting. In truth, one literature was setting, and another dawning.

The victory of the foreign taste was indeed say that the Saturnian measure, though believed by the Romans from a very early period ('credidit vetustas') to be of Italian invention, was really borrowed from the Greeks. But Terentianus Maurus does not say that it was first borrowed by Nævius. Nay, the expressions used by Terentianus Maurus clearly imply the contrary: for how could the Romans have believed, from a very early period, that this measure was the indigenous production of Latium, if it was really brought over from Greece in an age of intelligence and liberal curiosity, in the age which gave birth to Ennius, Plautus, Cato the Censor, and other distinguished writers? If Bentley's assertion were correct, there could have been no more doubt at Rome about the Greek origin of the Saturnian measure than about the Greek origin of hexameters or Sapphics.

* Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticæ*, i. 24.

36 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

decisive: and indeed we can hardly blame the Romans for turning away with contempt from the rude lays which had delighted their fathers, and giving their whole admiration to the immortal productions of Greece. The national romances, neglected by the great and the refined whose education had been finished at Rhodes or Athens, continued, it may be supposed, during some generations, to delight the vulgar. While Virgil, in hexameters of exquisite modulation, described the sports of rustics, those rustics were still singing their wild Saturnian ballads.* It is not improbable that, at the time when Cicero lamented the irreparable loss of the poems mentioned by Cato, a search among the nooks of the Apennines, as active as the search which Sir Walter

* See Servius, in *Georg.* ii. 385.

Scott made among the descendants of the mosstroopers of Liddesdale, might have brought to light many fine remains of ancient minstrelsy. No such search was made. The Latin ballads perished for ever. Yet discerning critics have thought that they could still perceive in the early history of Rome numerous fragments of this lost poetry, as the traveller on classic ground sometimes finds, built into the heavy wall of a fort or convent, a pillar rich with acanthus leaves, or a frieze where the Amazons and Bacchanals seem to live. The theatres and temples of the Greek and the Roman were degraded into the quarries of the Turk and the Goth. Even so did the ancient Saturnian poetry become the quarry in which a crowd of orators and annalists found the materials for their prose.

38 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

It is not difficult to trace the process by which the old songs were transmuted into the form which they now wear. Funeral panegyric and chronicle appear to have been the intermediate links which connected the lost ballads with the histories now extant. From a very early period it was the usage that an oration should be pronounced over the remains of a noble Roman. The orator, as we learn from Polybius, was expected, on such an occasion, to recapitulate all the services which the ancestors of the deceased had, from the earliest time, rendered to the commonwealth. There can be little doubt that the speaker on whom this duty was imposed would make use of all the stories suited to his purpose which were to be found in the popular lays. There can be as little doubt that the

family of an eminent man would preserve a copy of the speech which had been pronounced over his corpse. The compilers of the early chronicles would have recourse to these speeches ; and the great historians of a later period would have recourse to the chronicles.

It may be worth while to select a particular story, and to trace its probable progress through these stages. The description of the migration of the Fabian house to Cremera is one of the finest of the many fine passages which lie thick in the earlier books of Livy. The Consul, clad in his military garb, stands in the vestibule of his house, marshalling his clan, three hundred and six fighting men, all of the same proud patrician blood, all worthy to be attended by the fasces, and to command the legions. A sad and anxious retinue

of friends accompanies the adventurers through the streets; but the voice of lamentation is drowned by the shouts of admiring thousands. As the procession passes the Capitol, prayers and vows are poured forth, but in vain. The devoted band, leaving Janus on the right, marches to its doom through the Gate of Evil Luck. After achieving high deeds of valour against overwhelming numbers, all perish save one child, the stock from which the great Fabian race was destined again to spring for the safety and glory of the commonwealth. That this fine romance, the details of which are so full of poetical truth, and so utterly destitute of all show of historical truth, came originally from some lay which had often been sung with great applause at banquets, is in the highest degree probable. Nor is

it difficult to imagine a mode in which the transmission might have taken place.

The celebrated Quintus Fabius Maximus, who died about twenty years before the First Punic War, and more than forty years before Ennius was born, is said to have been interred with extraordinary pomp. In the eulogy pronounced over his body all the great exploits of his ancestors were doubtless recounted and exaggerated. If there were then extant songs which gave a vivid and touching description of an event, the saddest and the most glorious in the long history of the Fabian house, nothing could be more natural than that the panegyrist should borrow from such songs their finest touches, in order to adorn his speech. A few generations later the songs would perhaps be forgotten, or remembered only by shep-

42 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

herds and vine-dressers. But the speech would certainly be preserved in the archives of the Fabian nobles. Fabius Pictor would be well acquainted with a document so interesting to his personal feelings, and would insert large extracts from it in his rude chronicle. That chronicle, as we know, was the oldest to which Livy had access. Livy would at a glance distinguish the bold strokes of the forgotten poet from the dull and feeble narrative by which they were surrounded, would retouch them with a delicate and powerful pencil, and would make them immortal.

That this might happen at Rome can scarcely be doubted; for something very like this has happened in several countries, and, among others, in our own. Perhaps the theory of Peri-

zonius cannot be better illustrated than by showing that what he supposes to have taken place in ancient times, has, beyond all doubt, taken place in modern times.

‘History,’ says Hume with the utmost gravity, ‘has preserved some instances of Edgar’s amours, from which, as from a specimen, we may form a conjecture of the rest.’ He then tells very agreeably the stories of Elfleda and Elfrida, two stories which have a most suspicious air of romance, and which indeed greatly resemble, in their general character, some of the legends of early Rome. He cites, as his authority for these two tales, the chronicle of William of Malmesbury, who lived in the time of King Stephen. The great majority of readers suppose that the device by which Elfrida was

44 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

substituted for her young mistress, the artifice by which Athelwold obtained the hand of Elfrida, the detection of that artifice, the hunting party, and the vengeance of the amorous king, are things about which there is no more doubt than about the execution of Anne Boleyn, or the slitting of Sir John Coventry's nose. But when we turn to William of Malmesbury, we find that Hume, in his eagerness to relate these pleasant fables, has overlooked one very important circumstance. William does indeed tell both the stories; but he gives us distinct notice that he does not warrant their truth, and that they rest on no better authority than that of ballads.*

* ‘*Infamias quas post dicam magis resperserunt cantilenæ.*’ Edgar appears to have been most mercilessly treated in the Anglo-Saxon ballads.

Such is the way in which these two well-known tales have been handed down. They originally appeared in a poetical form. They found their way from ballads into an old chronicle. The ballads perished; the chronicle remained. A great historian, some centuries after the ballads had been altogether forgotten, consulted the chronicle. He was struck by the lively colouring of these ancient fictions; he transferred them to his pages; and thus we find inserted, as unquestionable facts, in a narrative which is likely to last as long as the English tongue, the inventions of some minstrel whose works were probably never committed to writing, whose name is buried in oblivion, and whose dialect has become

He was the favourite of the monks; and the monks and the minstrels were at deadly feud.

obsolete. It must, then, be admitted to be possible, or rather highly probable, that the stories of Romulus and Remus, and of the Horatii and Curiatii, may have had a similar origin.

Castilian literature will furnish us with another parallel case. Mariana, the classical historian of Spain, tells the story of the ill-starred marriage which the King Don Alonso brought about between the heirs of Carrion and the two daughters of the Cid. The Cid bestowed a princely dower on his sons-in-law. But the young men were base and proud, cowardly and cruel. They were tried in danger, and found wanting. They fled before the Moors, and once, when a lion broke out of his den, they ran and crouched in an unseemly hiding-place. They knew that they were despised, and took counsel how they

might be avenged. They parted from their father-in-law with many signs of love, and set forth on a journey with Doña Elvira and Doña Sol. In a solitary place the bridegrooms seized their brides, stripped them, scourged them, and departed, leaving them for dead. But one of the house of Bivar, suspecting foul play, had followed the travellers in disguise. The ladies were brought back safe to the house of their father. Complaint was made to the king. It was adjudged by the Cortes that the dower given by the Cid should be returned, and that the heirs of Carrion together with one of their kindred should do battle against three knights of the party of the Cid. The guilty youths would have declined the combat; but all their shifts were vain. They were vanquished in the lists, and

for ever disgraced, while their injured wives were sought in marriage by great princes.*

Some Spanish writers have laboured to show, by an examination of dates and circumstances, that this story is untrue. Such confutation was surely not needed; for the narrative is on the face of it a romance. How it found its way into Mariana's history is quite clear. He acknowledges his obligations to the ancient chronicles; and had doubtless before him the '*Cronica del famoso Cavallero Cid Ruy Diez Campeador*,' which had been printed as early as the year 1552. He little suspected that all the most striking passages in this chronicle were copied from a poem of the twelfth century, a poem of which the language and versi-

* Mariana, lib. x. cap. 4.

fication had long been obsolete, but which glowed with no common portion of the fire of the Iliad. Yet such was the fact. More than a century and a half after the death of Mariana, this venerable ballad, of which one imperfect copy on parchment, four hundred years old, had been preserved at Bivar, was for the first time printed. Then it was found that every interesting circumstance of the story of the heirs of Carrion was derived by the eloquent Jesuit from a song of which he had never heard, and which was composed by a minstrel whose very name had long been forgotten.*

* See the account which Sanchez gives of the Bivar manuscript in the first volume of the *Coleccion de Poesias Castellanas anteriores al Siglo XV*. Part of the story of the lords of Carrion, in the poem of the Cid, has been translated by Mr. Frere in a manner above all praise.

50 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Such, or nearly such, appears to have been the process by which the lost ballad-poetry of Rome was transformed into history. To reverse that process, to transform some portions of early Roman history back into the poetry out of which they were made, is the object of this work.

In the following poems the author speaks, not in his own person, but in the persons of ancient minstrels who know only what a Roman citizen, born three or four hundred years before the Christian era, may be supposed to have known, and who are in nowise above the passions and prejudices of their age and nation. To these imaginary poets must be ascribed some blunders which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to point them out. The real blunder would have been to repre-

sent these old poets as deeply versed in general history, and studious of chronological accuracy. To them must also be attributed the illiberal sneers at the Greeks, the furious party-spirit, the contempt for the arts of peace, the love of war for its own sake, the ungenerous exultation over the vanquished, which the reader will sometimes observe. To portray a Roman of the age of Camillus or Curius as superior to national antipathies, as mourning over the devastation and slaughter by which empire and triumphs were to be won, as looking on human suffering with the sympathy of Howard, or as treating conquered enemies with the delicacy of the Black Prince, would be to violate all dramatic propriety. The old Romans had some great virtues, fortitude, temperance, veracity, spirit to resist

oppression, respect for legitimate authority, fidelity in the observing of contracts, disinterestedness, ardent patriotism; but Christian charity and chivalrous generosity were alike unknown to them.

It would have been obviously improper to mimic the manner of any particular age or country. Something has been borrowed, however, from our own old ballads, and more from Sir Walter Scott, the great restorer of our ballad-poetry. To the *Iliad* still greater obligations are due; and those obligations have been contracted with the less hesitation, because there is reason to believe that some of the old Latin minstrels really had recourse to that inexhaustible store of poetical images.

It would have been easy to swell this little volume to a very considerable

bulk, by appending notes filled with quotations ; but to a learned reader such notes are not necessary ; for an unlearned reader they would have little interest ; and the judgment passed both by the learned and by the unlearned on a work of the imagination will always depend much more on the general character and spirit of such a work than on minute details.

HORATIUS.

THERE can be little doubt that among those parts of early Roman history which had a poetical origin was the legend of Horatius Cocles. We have several versions of the story, and these versions differ from each other in points of no small importance. Polybius, there is reason to believe, heard the tale recited over the remains of some Consul or Prætor descended from the old Horatian patricians; for he introduces it as a specimen of the narratives with which the Romans were in the habit of embellishing their funeral oratory. It is remarkable that, according to him, Horatius defended the bridge

alone, and perished in the waters. According to the chronicles which Livy and Dionysius followed, Horatius had two companions, swam safe to shore, and was loaded with honours and rewards.

These discrepancies are easily explained. Our own literature, indeed, will furnish an exact parallel to what may have taken place at Rome. It is highly probable that the memory of the war of Porsena was preserved by compositions much resembling the two ballads which stand first in the *Relics of Ancient English Poetry*. In both those ballads the English, commanded by the Percy, fight with the Scots, commanded by the Douglas. In one of the ballads the Douglas is killed by a nameless English archer, and the Percy by a Scottish spearman: in the other, the Percy slays the Douglas in single com-

bat, and is himself made prisoner. In the former, Sir Hugh Montgomery is shot through the heart by a Northumbrian bowman ; in the latter, he is taken, and exchanged for the Percy. Yet both the ballads relate to the same event, and that an event which probably took place within the memory of persons who were alive when both the ballads were made. One of the minstrels says :

‘ Old men that knowen the grounde well
yenoughe

Call it the battell of Otterburn :

At Otterburn began this spurne

Upon a monnyn day.

Ther was the dougghte Doglas sleane :

The Perse never went away.’

The other poet sums up the event in the following lines :

‘ Thys fraye bygan at Otterborne

Bytwene the nyghte and the day :

Ther the Dowglas lost hys lyfe,
And the Percy was lede away.'

It is by no means unlikely that there were two old Roman lays about the defence of the bridge; and that, while the story which Livy has transmitted to us was preferred by the multitude, the other, which ascribed the whole glory to Horatius alone, may have been the favourite with the Horatian house.

The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls. The author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had never really existed. The allusion, however, to the partial manner

in which the public lands were allotted, could proceed only from a plebeian; and the allusion to the fraudulent sale of spoils marks the date of the poem, and shows that the poet shared in the general discontent with which the proceedings of Camillus, after the taking of Veii, were regarded.

The penultimate syllable of the name Porsena has been shortened in spite of the authority of Niebuhr, who pronounces, without assigning any ground for his opinion, that Martial was guilty of a decided blunder in the line,

‘Hanc spectare manum Porsena non potuit.’

It is not easy to understand how any modern scholar, whatever his attainments may be,—and those of Niebuhr were undoubtedly immense,—can venture to pronounce that Martial did not

know the quantity of a word which he must have uttered and heard uttered a hundred times before he left school. Niebuhr seems also to have forgotten that Martial has fellow-culprits to keep him in countenance. Horace has committed the same decided blunder; for he gives us, as a pure iambic line,

‘Minacis aut Etrusca Porsenæ manus.’

Silius Italicus has repeatedly offended in the same way, as when he says,

‘Cernitur effugiens ardentem Porsena dextram :’

and again,

‘Clusinum vulgus, cum, Porsena magne, jubebas.’

A modern writer may be content to err in such company.

Niebuhr’s supposition, that each of the

three defenders of the bridge was the representative of one of the three patrician tribes, is both ingenious and probable, and has been adopted in the following poem.

HORATIUS.

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE
CITY CCCLX.

I.

LARS PORSENA of Clusium

By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.

By the Nine Gods he swore it,

And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

II.

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,

And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

III.

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place ;
From many a fruitful plain ;
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine ;

IV.

From lordly Volaterræ,
Where scowls the far-famed hold

64 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Piled by the hands of giants
For godlike kings of old ;
From seagirt Populonia,
Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
Fringing the southern sky ;

V.

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
Heavy with fair-haired slaves ;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
Through corn and vines and flowers ;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.

VI.

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill ;

Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill ;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear ;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

VII.

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill ;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill ;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer ;
Unharm'd the water fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

VIII.

The harvests of Arretium,
This year, old men shall reap,

66 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

This year, young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep ;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

IX.

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand :
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

X.

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given :

‘ Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena ;
Go forth, beloved of Heaven ;
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium’s royal dome ;
And hang round Nurscia’s altars
The golden shields of Rome.’

XI.

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men ;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten :
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

XII.

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,

68 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally ;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latin name.

XIII.

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright :
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways ;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

XIV.

For aged folks on crutches,
And women great with child,

And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled.
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

XV.

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of waggons
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

XVI.

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy

70 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

The line of blazing villages
 Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
 They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
 With tidings of dismay.

XVII.

To eastward and to westward
 Have spread the Tuscan bands ;
Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecote
 In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
 Hath wasted all the plain ;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
 And the stout guards are slain.

XVIII.

I wis, in all the Senate,
 There was no heart so bold,

But sore it ached and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all ;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

XIX.

They held a council standing
Before the River Gate ;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly :
‘ The bridge must straight go down ;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Nought else can save the town.’

XX.

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear ;

72 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

‘To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:

Lars Porsena is here.’

On the low hills to westward

The Consul fixed his eye,

And saw the swarthy storm of dust

Rise fast along the sky.

XXI.

And nearer fast and nearer

Doth the red whirlwind come;

And louder still and still more loud,

From underneath that rolling cloud,

Is heard the trumpet’s war-note proud,

The trampling, and the hum.

And plainly and more plainly

Now through the gloom appears,

Far to left and far to right,

In broken gleams of dark-blue light,

The long array of helmets bright,

The long array of spears.

XXII.

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine ;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

XXIII.

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen ;
And Astur of the four-fold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield,

74 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

XXIV.

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius
Prince of the Latian name ;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

XXV.

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spat towards him and hissed,

No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

XXVI.

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
' Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down ;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town ? '

XXVII.

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate :
' To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,

76 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods,

XXVIII.

‘ And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens,
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame ?

XXIX.

‘ Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may ;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.

Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me ?’

XXX.

Then out spake Spurius Lartius ;
A Ramnian proud was he :
‘ Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee.’
And out spake strong Herminius ;
Of Titian blood was he :
‘ I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee.’

XXXI.

‘ Horatius,’ quoth the Consul,
‘ As thou sayest, so let it be.’
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome’s quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,

78 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

XXXII.

Then none was for a party ;
Then all were for the state ;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great :
Then lands were fairly portioned ;
Then spoils were fairly sold :
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

XXXIII.

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold :

Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

XXXIV.

Now while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe :
And Fathers mixed with Commons,
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

XXXV.

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,

80 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

XXXVI.

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they
drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way;

XXXVII.

Aunus from green Tifernum
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;

And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that grey crag where, girt with
towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

XXXVIII.

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath :
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth :—
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust ;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

XXXIX.

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three ;

And Lausulus of Urgo

The rover of the sea ;

And Aruns of Volsinium,

Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
Along Albinia's shore.

XL.

Herminius smote down Aruns :

Lartius laid Ocnus low :

Right to the heart of Lausulus

Horatius sent a blow.

'Lie there,' he cried, 'fell pirate !

No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice accursed sail.'

XLI.

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard among the foes,
A wild and wrathful clamour
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow way.

XLII.

But hark ! the cry is Astur :
And lo ! the ranks divide ;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

XLIII.

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high ;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, ' The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay :
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way ? '

XLIV.

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too
nigh ;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh :

The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

XLV.

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing space ;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face ;
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth
out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

XLVI.

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread ;

86 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And the pale augurs, muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

XLVII.

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
'And see,' he cried, 'the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?'

XLVIII.

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath, and shame, and
dread
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race;

For all Etruria's noblest
Were round the fatal place.

XLIX.

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three :
And, from the ghastly entrance
Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

L.

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack :
But those behind cried 'Forward !'
And those before cried 'Back !'

88 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And backward now and forward
Wavers the deep array ;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel ;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
Dies fitfully away.

LI.

Yet one man for one moment
Stood out before the crowd ;
Well known was he to all the Three,
And they gave him greeting loud,
' Now welcome, welcome, Sextus !
Now welcome to thy home !
Why dost thou stay, and turn away ?
Here lies the road to Rome.'

LII.

Thrice looked he at the city ;
Thrice looked he at the dead ;

And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread :
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way,
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

LIII.

But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied ;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
' Come back, come back, Horatius !'
Loud cried the Fathers all.
' Back, Lartius ! back, Herminius !
Back, ere the ruin fall !'

LIV.

Back darted Spurius Lartius ;
Herminius darted back :

90 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And, as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

LV.

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream.
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam.

LVI.

And, like a horse unbroken
When first he feels the rein,

The furious river struggled hard,
And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded,
Rejoicing to be free,
And, whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
Rushed headlong to the sea.

LVII.

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind ;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
'Down with him !' cried false Sextus,
With a smile on his pale face.
'Now yield thee,' cried Lars Porsena,
'Now yield thee to our grace.'

LVIII.

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see ;

92 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Nought spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus nought spake he ;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home ;
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

LIX.

‘ Oh, Tiber ! father Tiber !
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman’s life, a Roman’s arms,
Take thou in charge this day ! ’
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back,
Plunged headlong in the tide.

LX.

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank ;

But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
 Stood gazing where he sank ;
And when above the surges
 They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
 Could scarce forbear to cheer.

LXI.

But fiercely ran the current,
 Swollen high by months of rain :
And fast his blood was flowing ;
 And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
 And spent with changing blows :
And oft they thought him sinking,
 But still again he rose.

LXII.

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
 In such an evil case,

94 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing place :
But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bore bravely up his chin.*

LXIII.

‘Curse on him!’ quoth false Sextus ;
‘Will not the villain drown ?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town !’
‘Heaven help him!’ quoth Lars
Porsena,
‘And bring him safe to shore ;

* ‘Our ladye bare upp her chinne.’

Ballad of Childe Waters.

‘Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent’s force ;
Yet, through good heart and our Lady’s grace,
At length he gained the landing place.’

Lay of the Last Minstrel, I.

For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before.'

LXIV.

And now he feels the bottom ;
Now on dry earth he stands ;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands ;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

LXV.

They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn till night ;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,

96 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

LXVI.

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see ;
Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee :
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

LXVII.

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home ;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold

As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

LXVIII.

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow ;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within ;

LXIX.

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit ;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit ;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close ;

98 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows ;

LXX.

When the goodman mends his armour,
And trims his helmet's plume ;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom ;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

THE following poem is supposed to have been produced about ninety years after the lay of Horatius. Some persons mentioned in the lay of Horatius make their appearance again, and some appellations and epithets used in the lay of Horatius have been purposely repeated: for, in an age of ballad-poetry, it scarcely ever fails to happen that certain phrases come to be appropriated to certain men and things, and are regularly applied to those men and things by every minstrel. Thus we find, both in the Homeric poems and in Hesiod, βιη Ἡρακλεΐη, περικλύτος

100 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Ἀμφιγυήεις, διάκτορος Ἀργειφόντης, ἐπτάτυλος
Θήβη, Ἑλένης ἔνεκ' ἡϊκόμοιο. Thus, too, in
our own national songs, Douglas is
almost always the doughty Douglas;
England is merry England; all the
gold is red; and all the ladies are gay.

The principal distinction between the
lay of Horatius and the lay of the Lake
Regillus is, that the former is meant to
be purely Roman, while the latter,
though national in its general spirit, has
a slight tincture of Greek learning and
of Greek superstition. The story of
the Tarquins, as it has come down to
us, appears to have been compiled from
the works of several popular poets;
and one, at least, of those poets ap-
pears to have visited the Greek colonies
in Italy, if not Greece itself, and to
have had some acquaintance with the
works of Homer and Herodotus. Many

of the most striking adventures of the house of Tarquin, before Lucretia makes her appearance, have a Greek character. The Tarquins themselves are represented as Corinthian nobles of the great house of the Bacchiadæ, driven from their country by the tyranny of that Cypselus, the tale of whose strange escape Herodotus has related with incomparable simplicity and liveliness.* Livy and Dionysius tell us that, when Tarquin the Proud was asked what was the best mode of governing a conquered city, he replied only by beating down with his staff all the tallest poppies in his garden.† This is exactly what Herodotus, in the passage to which reference has already been made, relates of the counsel given to

* Herodotus, v. 92. Livy, i. 34. Dionysius, iii. 46.

† Livy, i. 54. Dionysius, iv. 56.

Periander, the son of Cypselus. The stratagem by which the town of Gabii is brought under the power of the Tarquins is, again, obviously copied from Herodotus.* The embassy of the young Tarquins to the oracle at Delphi is just such a story as would be told by a poet whose head was full of the Greek mythology; and the ambiguous answer returned by Apollo is in the exact style of the prophecies which, according to Herodotus, lured Cræsus to destruction. Then the character of the narrative changes. From the first mention of Lucretia to the retreat of Porsena nothing seems to be borrowed from foreign sources. The villainy of Sextus, the suicide of his victim, the revolution, the death of the sons of Brutus, the defence of the bridge,

* Herodotus, iii. 154. Livy, i. 53.

Mucius burning his hand,* Clœlia swimming through Tiber, seem to be all strictly Roman. But when we have done with the Tuscan war, and enter upon the war with the Latines, we are again struck by the Greek air of the story. The Battle of the Lake Regillus is in all respects a Homeric battle, except that the combatants ride astride on their horses, instead of driving chariots. The mass of fighting men is hardly mentioned. The leaders single each other out, and engage hand to hand. The great object of the warriors on both sides is, as in the *Iliad*, to obtain possession of the spoils and bodies of the slain; and several cir-

* M. de Pouilly attempted, a hundred and twenty years ago, to prove that the story of Mucius was of Greek origin; but he was signally confuted by the Abbé Sallier. See the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, vi. 27, 66.

cumstances are related which forcibly remind us of the great slaughter round the corpses of Sarpedon and Patroclus.

But there is one circumstance which deserves especial notice. Both the war of Troy and the war of Regillus were caused by the licentious passions of young princes, who were therefore peculiarly bound not to be sparing of their own persons in the day of battle. Now the conduct of Sextus at Regillus, as described by Livy, so exactly resembles that of Paris, as described at the beginning of the third book of the Iliad, that it is difficult to believe the resemblance accidental. Paris appears before the Trojan ranks, defying the bravest Greek to encounter him :

Τρῳσὶν μὲν προμάχισεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής,
 Ἀργείων προκαλίζετο πάντας ἀρίστους,
 ἀντίβιον μαχέσασθαι ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊότητι.

Livy introduces Sextus in a similar manner: ‘*Ferocem juvenem Tarquinius, ostentantem se in prima exsulum acie.*’ Menelaus rushes to meet Paris. A Roman noble, eager for vengeance, spurs his horse towards Sextus. Both the guilty princes are instantly terror-stricken :

Τὸν δ’ ὥς οὖν ἐνόησεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδὴς
 ἐν προμάχοισι φανέντα, κατεπλήγη φίλον ἦτορ·
 ἄψ δ’ ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ’ ἀλεείνων.

‘*Tarquinius,*’ says Livy, ‘*retro in agmen suorum infenso cessit hosti.*’ If this be a fortuitous coincidence, it is one of the most extraordinary in literature.

In the following poem, therefore, images and incidents have been borrowed, not merely without scruple, but on principle, from the incomparable battle-pieces of Homer.

The popular belief at Rome, from an early period, seems to have been that the event of the great day of Regillus was decided by supernatural agency. Castor and Pollux, it was said, had fought, armed and mounted, at the head of the legions of the commonwealth, and had afterwards carried the news of the victory with incredible speed to the city. The well in the Forum at which they had alighted was pointed out. Near the well rose their ancient temple. A great festival was kept to their honour on the Ides of Quintilis, supposed to be the anniversary of the battle; and on that day sumptuous sacrifices were offered to them at the public charge. One spot on the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in

shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock ; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers.

How the legend originated cannot now be ascertained ; but we may easily imagine several ways in which it might have originated ; nor is it at all necessary to suppose, with Julius Frontinus, that two young men were dressed up by the Dictator to personate the sons of Leda. It is probable that Livy is correct when he says that the Roman general, in the hour of peril, vowed a temple to Castor. If so, nothing could be more natural than that the multitude should ascribe the victory to the favour of the Twin Gods. When such was the prevailing sentiment, any man who chose to declare that, in the midst of the confusion and

slaughter, he had seen two godlike forms on white horses scattering the Latines, would find ready credence. We know, indeed, that in modern times a very similar story actually found credence among a people much more civilised than the Romans of the fifth century before Christ. A chaplain of Cortes, writing about thirty years after the conquest of Mexico, in an age of printing presses, libraries, universities, scholars, logicians, jurists, and statesmen, had the face to assert that, in one engagement against the Indians, Saint James had appeared on a grey horse at the head of the Castilian adventurers. Many of those adventurers were living when this lie was printed. One of them, honest Bernal Diaz, wrote an account of the expedition. He had the evidence of his own

senses against the legend; but he seems to have distrusted even the evidence of his own senses. He says that he was in the battle, and that he saw a grey horse with a man on his back, but that the man was, to his thinking, Francesco de Morla, and not the ever-blessed apostle Saint James. ‘Nevertheless,’ Bernal adds, ‘it may be that the person on the grey horse was the glorious apostle Saint James, and that I, sinner that I am, was unworthy to see him.’ The Romans of the age of Cincinnatus were probably quite as credulous as the Spanish subjects of Charles the Fifth. It is therefore conceivable that the appearance of Castor and Pollux may have become an article of faith before the generation which had fought at Regillus had passed away. Nor could anything be

more natural than that the poets of the next age should embellish this story, and make the celestial horseman bear the tidings of victory to Rome.

Many years after the temple of the Twin Gods had been built in the Forum, an important addition was made to the ceremonial by which the state annually testified its gratitude for their protection. Quintus Fabius and Publius Decius were elected Censors at a momentous crisis. It had become absolutely necessary that the classification of the citizens should be revised. On that classification depended the distribution of political power. Party-spirit ran high; and the republic seemed to be in danger of falling under the dominion either of a narrow oligarchy or of an ignorant and headstrong rabble. Under such circum-

stances, the most illustrious patrician and the most illustrious plebeian of the age were entrusted with the office of arbitrating between the angry factions ; and they performed their arduous task to the satisfaction of all honest and reasonable men.

One of their reforms was a remodeling of the equestrian order ; and, having effected this reform, they determined to give to their work a sanction derived from religion. In the chivalrous societies of modern times, societies which have much more than may at first sight appear in common with the equestrian order of Rome, it has been usual to invoke the special protection of some Saint, and to observe his day with peculiar solemnity. Thus the Companions of the Garter wear the image of Saint George de-

pending from their collars, and meet, on great occasions, in Saint George's Chapel. Thus, when Lewis the Fourteenth instituted a new order of chivalry for the rewarding of military merit, he commended it to the favour of his own glorified ancestor and patron, and decreed that all the members of the fraternity should meet at the royal palace on the feast of Saint Lewis, should attend the king to chapel, should hear mass, and should subsequently hold their great annual assembly. There is a considerable resemblance between this rule of the order of Saint Lewis and the rule which Fabius and Decius made respecting the Roman knights. It was ordained that a grand muster and inspection of the equestrian body should be part of the ceremonial performed, on the anniversary

of the battle of Regillus, in honour of Castor and Pollux, the two equestrian Gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, were to meet at a temple of Mars in the suburbs. Thence they were to ride in state to the Forum, where the temple of the Twins stood. This pageant was, during several centuries, considered as one of the most splendid sights of Rome. In the time of Dionysius the cavalcade sometimes consisted of five thousand horsemen, all persons of fair repute and easy fortune.*

There can be no doubt that the Censors who instituted this august

* See Livy, ix. 46. Val. Max. ii. 2. Aurel. Vict. De Viris Illustribus, 32. Dionysius, vi. 13. Plin. Hist. Nat. xv. 5. See also the singularly ingenious chapter in Niebuhr's posthumous volume, *Die Censur des Q. Fabius und P. Decius*.

ceremony acted in concert with the Pontiffs to whom, by the constitution of Rome, the superintendence of the public worship belonged; and it is probable that those high religious functionaries were, as usual, fortunate enough to find in their books or traditions some warrant for the innovation.

The following poem is supposed to have been made for this great occasion. Songs, we know, were chanted at the religious festivals of Rome from an early period; indeed from so early a period, that some of the sacred verses were popularly ascribed to Numa, and were utterly unintelligible in the age of Augustus. In the Second Punic War a great feast was held in honour of Juno, and a song was sung in her praise. This song was extant when Livy wrote; and, though exceedingly rugged and un-

couth, seemed to him not wholly destitute of merit.* A song, as we learn from Horace,† was part of the established ritual at the great Secular Jubilee. It is therefore likely that the Censors and Pontiffs, when they had resolved to add a grand procession of knights to the other solemnities annually performed on the Ides of Quintilis, would call in the aid of a poet. Such a poet would naturally take for his subject the battle of Regillus, the appearance of the Twin Gods, and the institution of their festival. He would find abundant materials in the ballads of his predecessors; and he would make free use of the scanty stock of Greek learning which he had himself acquired. He would probably intro-

* Livy, xxvii. 37.

† Hor. Carmen Seulare.

duce some wise and holy Pontiff enjoining the magnificent ceremonial, which, after a long interval, had at length been adopted. If the poem succeeded, many persons would commit it to memory. Parts of it would be sung to the pipe at banquets. It would be peculiarly interesting to the great Posthumian House, which numbered among its many images that of the Dictator Aulus, the hero of Regillus. The orator who, in the following generation, pronounced the funeral panegyric over the remains of Lucius Posthumius Megellus, thrice Consul, would borrow largely from the lay; and thus some passages, much disfigured, would probably find their way into the chronicles which were afterwards in the hands of Dionysius and Livy.

Antiquaries differ widely as to the situation of the field of battle. The opinion of those who suppose that the armies met near Cornufelle, between Frascati and the Monte Porzio, is at least plausible, and has been followed in the poem.

As to the details of the battle, it has not been thought desirable to adhere minutely to the accounts which have come down to us. Those accounts, indeed, differ widely from each other, and, in all probability, differ as widely from the ancient poem from which they were originally derived.

It is unnecessary to point out the obvious imitations of the *Iliad*, which have been purposely introduced.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR
AND POLLUX, ON THE IDES OF
QUINTILIS, IN THE YEAR OF THE
CITY CCCCLI.

I.

Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note !
Ho, lictors, clear the way !
The Knights will ride, in all their pride,
Along the streets to-day.
To-day the doors and windows
Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum,
To Mars without the wall.

Each Knight is robed in purple,
With olive each is crowned ;
A gallant war-horse under each
Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Shall have such honour still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends :
December's Nones are gay :
But the proud Ides, when the squadron
rides,
Shall be Rome's whitest day.

II.

Unto the Great Twin Brethren
We keep this solemn feast.
Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren
Came spurring from the east.
They came o'er wild Parthenius
Tossing in waves of pine,

120 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam,
O'er purple Apennine,
From where with flutes and dances
Their ancient mansion rings,
In lordly Lacedæmon,
The City of two kings,
To where, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum,
Was fought the glorious fight.

III.

Now on the place of slaughter
Are cots and sheepfolds seen
And rows of vines, and fields of wheat,
And apple-orchards green ;
The swine crush the big acorns
That fall from Corne's oaks.
Upon the turf by the Fair Fount
The reaper's pottage smokes.

The fisher baits his angle ;
The hunter twangs his bow ;
Little they think on those strong limbs
That moulder deep below.
Little they think how sternly
That day the trumpets pealed ;
How in the slippery swamp of blood
Warrior and war-horse reeled ;
How wolves came with fierce gallop,
And crows on eager wings,
To tear the flesh of captains,
And peck the eyes of kings ;
How thick the dead lay scattered
Under the Porcian height ;
How through the gates of Tusculum
Raved the wild stream of flight ;
And how the Lake Regillus
Bubbled with crimson foam,
What time the Thirty Cities
Came forth to war with Rome.

IV.

But, Roman, when thou standest
Upon that holy ground,
Look thou with heed on the dark rock
That girds the dark lake round,
So shalt thou see a hoof-mark
Stamped deep into the flint :
It was no hoof of mortal steed
That made so strange a dint :
There to the Great Twin Brethren
Vow thou thy vows, and pray
That they, in tempest and in fight,
Will keep thy head alway.

V.

Since last the Great Twin Brethren
Of mortal eyes were seen,
Have years gone by an hundred
And fourscore and thirteen.

That summer a Virginius
Was Consul first in place ;
The second was stout Aulus,
Of the Posthumian race.
The Herald of the Latines
From Gabii came in state :
The Herald of the Latines
Passed through Rome's Eastern Gate :
The Herald of the Latines
Did in our Forum stand ;
And there he did his office,
A sceptre in his hand.

VI.

'Hear, Senators and people
Of the good town of Rome,
The Thirty Cities charge you
To bring the Tarquins home :
And if ye still be stubborn,
To work the Tarquins wrong,

The Thirty Cities warn you,
Look that your walls be strong.'

VII.

Then spake the Consul Aulus,
He spake a bitter jest :
'Once the jay sent a message
Unto the eagle's nest :—
Now yield thou up thine eyrie
Unto the carrion-kite,
Or come forth valiantly, and face
The jays in deadly fight.—
Forth looked in wrath the eagle ;
And carrion-kite and jay,
Soon as they saw his beak and claw,
Fled screaming far away.'

VIII.

The Herald of the Latines
Hath hied him back in state ;

The Fathers of the City
Are met in high debate.
Then spake the elder Consul,
An ancient man and wise :
' Now hearken, Conscript Fathers,
To that which I advise.
In seasons of great peril
'Tis good that one bear sway ;
Then choose we a Dictator,
Whom all men shall obey.
Camerium knows how deeply
The sword of Aulus bites,
And all our city calls him
The man of seventy fights.
Then let him be Dictator
For six months and no more,
And have a Master of the Knights,
And axes twenty-four.'

IX.

So Aulus was Dictator.

The man of seventy fights ;
He made Æbutius Elva

His Master of the Knights.
On the third morn thereafter,

At dawning of the day,
Did Aulus and Æbutius

Set forth with their array.
Sempronius Atratinus

Was left in charge at home
With boys, and with grey-headed men,
To keep the walls of Rome.

Hard by the Lake Regillus

Our camp was pitched at night ;
Eastward a mile the Latines lay,
Under the Porcian height.

Far over hill and valley

Their mighty host was spread ;
And with their thousand watch-fires
The midnight sky was red.

x.

Up rose the golden morning
Over the Porcian height,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Marked evermore with white,
Not without secret trouble
Our bravest saw the foes ;
For girt by threescore thousand spears,
The thirty standards rose.
From every warlike city
That boasts the Latian name,
Foredoomed to dogs and vultures,
That gallant army came ;
From Setia's purple vineyards,
From Norba's ancient wall,
From the white streets of Tusculum,
The proudest town of all ;
From where the Witch's Fortress
O'erhangs the dark-blue seas ;
From the still glassy lake that sleeps
Beneath Aricia's trees—

Those trees in whose dim shadow
 The ghastly priest doth reign,
 The priest who slew the slayer,
 And shall himself be slain ;
 From the drear banks of Ufens,
 Where flights of marsh-fowl play,
 And buffaloes lie wallowing
 Through the hot summer's day ;
 From the gigantic watch-towers,
 No work of earthly men,
 Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook
 The never-ending fen ;
 From the Laurentian jungle,
 The wild hogs' reedy home ;
 From the green steeps whence Anio
 leaps
 In floods of snow-white foam.

XI.

Aricia, Cora, Norba,
 Velitræ, with the might

Of Setia and of Tusculum,
Were marshalled on the right :
The leader was Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name ;
Upon his head a helmet
Of red gold shone like flame :
High on a gallant charger
Of dark-grey hue he rode :
Over his gilded armour
A vest of purple flowed,
Woven in the land of sunrise
By Syria's dark-browed daughters,
And by the sails of Carthage brought
Far o'er the southern waters.

XII.

Lavinium and Laurentum
Had on the left their post,
With all the banners of the marsh,
And banners of the coast.

130 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Their leader was false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame :
With restless pace and haggard face
To his last field he came.
Men said he saw strange visions
Which none beside might see,
And that strange sounds were in his ears
Which none might hear but he.
A woman fair and stately,
But pale as are the dead,
Oft through the watches of the night
Sat spinning by his bed.
And as she plied the distaff,
In a sweet voice and low,
She sang of great old houses,
And fights fought long ago.
So spun she, and so sang she,
Until the east was grey,
Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
And shrieked, and fled away.

XIII.

But in the centre thickest
Were ranged the shields of foes,
And from the centre loudest
The cry of battle rose.
There Tibur marched and Pedum
Beneath proud Tarquin's rule
And Ferentinum of the rock,
And Gabii of the pool.
There rode the Volscian succours :
There, in a dark stern ring,
The Roman exiles gathered close
Around the ancient king.
Though white as Mount Soracte,
When winter nights are long,
His beard flowed down o'er mail and
belt,
His heart and hand were strong :
Under his hoary eyebrows
Still flashed forth quenchless rage,

132 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And, if the lance shook in his gripe,
'Twas more with hate than age.
Close at his side was Titus
On an Apulian steed,
Titus, the youngest Tarquin,
Too good for such a breed.

XIV.

Now on each side the leaders
Give signal for the charge ;
And on each side the footmen
Strode on with lance and targe ;
And on each side the horsemen
Struck their spurs deep in gore ;
And front to front the armies
Met with a mighty roar :
And under that great battle
The earth with blood was red ;
And, like the Pomptine fog at morn,
The dust hung overhead ;

And louder still and louder
Rose from the darkened field
The braying of the war-horns,
The clang of sword and shield,
The rush of squadrons sweeping
Like whirlwinds o'er the plain,
The shouting of the slayers,
And screeching of the slain.

XV.

False Sextus rode out foremost:
His look was high and bold;
His corselet was of bison's hide,
Plated with steel and gold.
As glares the famished eagle
From the Digentian rock
On a choice lamb that bounds alone
Before Bandusia's flock,
Herminius glared on Sextus,
And came with eagle speed,

134 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Herminius on black Auster,
 Brave champion on brave steed ;
In his right hand the broadsword
 That kept the bridge so well,
And on his helm the crown he won
 When proud Fidenæ fell.
Woe to the maid whose lover
 Shall cross his path to-day !
False Sextus saw, and trembled,
 And turned, and fled away.
As turns, as flies, the woodman
 In the Calabrian brake,
When through the reeds gleams the
 round eye
 Of that fell speckled snake ;
So turned, so fled, false Sextus,
 And hid him in the rear,
Behind the dark Lavinian ranks,
 Bristling with crest and spear.

XVI.

But far to north Æbutius,
The Master of the Knights,
Gave Tubero of Norba
To feed the Porcian kites.
Next under those red horse-hoofs
Flaccus of Setia lay ;
Better had he been pruning
Among his elms that day.
Mamilius saw the slaughter,
And tossed his golden crest,
And towards the Master of the
Knights
Through the thick battle pressed.
Æbutius smote Mamilius
So fiercely on the shield,
That the great lord of Tusculum
Well nigh rolled on the field.
Mamilius smote Æbutius,
With a good aim and true,

Just where the neck and shoulder join,
 And pierced him through and through ;
 And brave Æbutius Elva
 Fell swooning to the ground :
 But a thick wall of bucklers
 Encompassed him around.
 His clients from the battle
 Bare him some little space,
 And filled a helm from the dark lake,
 And bathed his brow and face ;
 And when at last he opened
 His swimming eyes to light,
 Men say, the earliest word he spake
 Was ' Friends, how goes the fight ? '

XVII.

But meanwhile in the centre
 Great deeds of arms were wrought :
 There Aulus the Dictator
 And there Valerius fought.

Aulus with his good broadsword
A bloody passage cleared
To where, amidst the thickest foes,
He saw the long white beard.
Flat lighted that good broadsword
Upon proud Tarquin's head.
He dropped the lance : he dropped the
reins :

He fell as fall the dead.
Down Aulus springs to slay him,
With eyes like coals of fire ;
But faster Titus hath sprung down,
And hath bestrode his sire.
Latian captains, Roman knights,
Fast down to earth they spring,
And hand to hand they fight on foot
Around the ancient king.
First Titus gave tall Cæso
A death wound in the face ;
Tall Cæso was the bravest man
Of the brave Fabian race :

138 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Aulus slew Rex of Gabii,
The priest of Juno's shrine :
Valerius smote down Julius,
Of Rome's great Julian line ;
Julius, who left his mansion
High on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and
woe
Followed proud Tarquin still.
Now right across proud Tarquin
A corpse was Julius laid ;
And Titus groaned with rage and grief,
And at Valerius made.
Valerius struck at Titus,
And lopped off half his crest ;
But Titus stabbed Valerius
A span deep in the breast.
Like a mast snapped by the tempest,
Valerius reeled and fell.
Ah ! woe is me for the good house
That loves the people well !

Then shouted loud the Latines ;
And with one rush they bore
The struggling Romans backward
Three lances' length and more ;
And up they took proud Tarquin,
And laid him on a shield,
And four strong yeomen bare him,
Still senseless, from the field.

XVIII.

But fiercer grew the fighting
Around Valerius dead ;
For Titus dragged him by the foot,
And Aulus by the head.
' On, Latines, on ! ' quoth Titus,
' See how the rebels fly ! '
' Romans, stand firm ! ' quoth Aulus,
' And win this fight or die ! '
They must not give Valerius
To raven and to kite ;

140 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

For aye Valerius loathed the wrong,
And aye upheld the right :
And for your wives and babies
In the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house
That loves the people well !'

XIX.

Then tenfold round the body,
The roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest,
When a strong north wind blows.
Now backward, and now forward,
Rocked furiously the fray,
Till none could see Valerius,
And none wist where he lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns
Were heaped there in a mound,
And corpses stiff, and dying men
That writhed and gnawed the
ground :

And wounded horses kicking,
And snorting purple foam :
Right well did such a couch befit
A Consular of Rome.

XX.

But north looked the Dictator ;
North looked he long and hard ;
And spake to Caius Cossus,
The Captain of his Guard :
‘ Caius, of all the Romans
Thou hast the keenest sight ;
Say, what through yonder storm of dust
Comes from the Latian right ? ’

XXI.

Then answered Caius Cossus,
‘ I see an evil sight ;
The banner of proud Tusculum
Comes from the Latian right ;

I see the plumed horsemen ;
And far before the rest
I see the dark-grey charger,
I see the purple vest ;
I see the golden helmet
That shines far off like flame ;
So ever rides Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.'

XXII.

' Now hearken, Caius Cossus :
Spring on thy horse's back ;
Ride as the wolves of Apennine
Were all upon thy track ;
Haste to our southward battle :
And never draw thy rein
Until thou find Herminius,
And bid him come amain.'

XXIII.

So Aulus spake, and turned him
Again to that fierce strife ;

And Caius Cossus mounted,
And rode for death and life.
Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs
The helmets of the dead,
And many a curdling pool of blood
Splashed him from heel to head.
So came he far to southward,
Where fought the Roman host,
Against the banners of the marsh
And banners of the coast.
Like corn before the sickle
The stout Lavinians fell,
Beneath the edge of the true sword
That kept the bridge so well.

XXIV.

‘ Herminius ! Aulus greets thee ;
He bids thee come with speed,
To help our central battle ;
For sore is there our need.

There wars the youngest Tarquin,
 And there the Crest of Flame,
 The Tusculan Mamilius,
 Prince of the Latian name.
 Valerius hath fallen fighting
 In front of our array :
 And Aulus of the seventy fields
 Alone upholds the day.'

XXV.

Herminius beat his bosom :
 But never a word he spake.
 He clapped his hand on Auster's mane :
 He gave the reins a shake,
 Away, away went Auster,
 Like an arrow from the bow :
 Black Auster was the fleetest steed
 From Aufidus to Po.

XXVI.

Right glad were all the Romans
Who, in that hour of dread,
Against great odds bare up the war
Around Valerius dead,
When from the south the cheering
Rose with a mighty swell ;
' Herminius comes, Herminius,
Who kept the bridge so well !'

XXVII.

Mamilius spied Herminius,
And dashed across the way.
' Herminius ! I have sought thee
Through many a bloody day.
One of us two, Herminius,
Shall never more go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum,
And lay thou on for Rome !'

XXVIII.

All round them paused the battle,
While met in mortal fray,
The Roman and the Tusculan,
The horses black and grey.
Herminius smote Mamilius
Through breast-plate and through
breast ;
And fast flowed out the purple blood
Over the purple vest.
Mamilius smote Herminius
Through head-piece and through
head ;
And side by side those chiefs of pride
Together fell down dead.
Down fell they dead together
In a great lake of gore ;
And still stood all who saw them fall
While men might count a score.

XXIX.

Fast, fast, with heels wild spurning,
The dark-grey charger fled :
He burst through ranks of fighting men ;
He sprang o'er heaps of dead.
His bridle far out-streaming,
His flanks all blood and foam,
He sought the southern mountains,
The mountains of his home.
The pass was steep and rugged,
The wolves they howled and whined ;
But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
And he left the wolves behind.
Through many a startled hamlet
Thundered his flying feet ;
He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
He rushed up the long white street ;
He rushed by tower and temple,
And paused not from his race

148 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Till he stood before his master's door
In the stately market-place.
And straightway round him gathered
A pale and trembling crowd,
And when they knew him, cries of rage
Brake forth, and wailing loud :
And women rent their tresses
For their great prince's fall ;
And old men girt on their old swords,
And went to man the wall.

XXX.

But, like a graven image,
Black Auster kept his place,
And ever wistfully he looked
Into his master's face.
The raven mane that daily,
With pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and
combed
And twined in even tresses,

And decked with coloured ribands
From her own gay attire,
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse
In carnage and in mire.
Forth with a shout sprang Titus,
And seized black Auster's rein.
Then Aulus sware a fearful oath,
And ran at him amain.
'The furies of thy brother
With me and mine abide,
If one of your accursed house
Upon black Auster ride!'
As on an Alpine watch-tower
From heaven comes down the
flame,
Full on the neck of Titus
The blade of Aulus came;
And out the red blood spouted,
In a wide arch and tall,
As spouts a fountain in the court
Of some rich Capuan's hall.

150 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

The knees of all the Latines
Were loosened with dismay
When dead, on dead Herminius,
The bravest Tarquin lay.

XXXI.

And Aulus the Dictator
Stroked Auster's raven mane,
With heed he looked unto the girths,
With heed unto the rein.
'Now bear me well, black Auster,
Into yon thick array;
And thou and I will have revenge
For thy good lord this day.'

XXXII.

So spake he; and was buckling
Tighter black Auster's band,
When he was aware of a princely pair
That rode at his right hand.

So like they were, no mortal
Might one from other know :
White as snow their armour was :
Their steeds were white as snow.
Never on earthly anvil
Did such rare armour gleam ;
And never did such gallant steeds
Drink of an earthly stream.

XXXIII.

And all who saw them trembled ;
And pale grew every cheek ;
And Aulus the Dictator
Scarce gathered voice to speak,
' Say by what name men call you ?
What city is your home ?
And wherefore ride ye in such guise
Before the ranks of Rome ? '

XXIV.

‘ By many names men call us,
In many lands we dwell :
Well Samothracia knows us ;
Cyrene knows us well.
Our house in gay Tarentum
Is hung each morn with flowers :
High o’er the masts of Syracuse
Our marble portal towers ;
But by the proud Eurotas
Is our dear native home ;
And for the right we come to fight
Before the ranks of Rome.’

XXXV.

So answered those strange horsemen,
And each couched low his spear ;
And forthwith all the ranks of Rome
Were bold, and of good cheer :

And on the thirty armies
Came wonder and affright,
And Ardea wavered on the left,
And Cora on the right.
'Rome to the charge!' cried Aulus;
'The foe begins to yield!
Charge for the hearth of Vesta!
Charge for the Golden Shield!
Let no man stop to plunder,
But slay, and slay, and slay;
The Gods who live for ever
Are on our side to-day.'

XXXVI.

Then the fierce trumpet flourish
From earth to heaven arose.
The kites know well the long stern swell
That bids the Romans close.
Then the good sword of Aulus
Was lifted up to slay:

154 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Then, like a crag down Apennine,
Rushed Auster through the fray.
But under those strange horsemen
Still thicker lay the slain ;
And after those strange horses
Black Auster toiled in vain.
Behind them Rome's long battle
Came rolling on the foe,
Ensigns dancing wild above,
Blades all in line below.
So comes the Po in flood-time
Upon the Celtic plain :
So comes the squall, blacker than
night,
Upon the Adrian main.
Now, by our Sire Quirinus,
It was a goodly sight
To see the thirty standards
Swept down the tide of flight.
So flies the spray of Adria
When the black squall doth blow,

So corn-sheaves in the flood-time
Spin down the whirling Po.
False Sextus to the mountains
Turned first his horse's head ;
And fast fled Ferentinum,
And fast Lanuvium fled,
The horsemen of Nomentum
Spurred hard out of the fray ;
The footmen of Velitræ
Threw shield and spear away.
And underfoot was trampled,
Amidst the mud and gore,
The banner of proud Tusculum,
That never stooped before :
And down went Flavius Faustus,
Who led his stately ranks
From where the apple blossoms
wave
On Anio's echoing banks,
And Tullus of Arpinum,
Chief of the Volscian aids,

156 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And Metius with the long fair curls,
The love of Anxur's maids,
And the white head of Vulso,
The great Arician seer,
And Nepos of Laurentum,
The hunter of the deer ;
And in the back false Sextus
Felt the good Roman steel,
And wriggling in the dust he died,
Like a worm beneath the wheel :
And fliers and pursuers
Were mingled in a mass ;
And far away the battle
Went roaring through the pass.

XXXVII.

Sempronius Attratinus
Sate in the Eastern Gate,
Beside him were three Fathers,
Each in his chair of state ;

Fabius, whose nine stout grand-
sons

That day were in the field,
And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve

Who kept the Golden Shield ;
And Sergius, the High Pontiff,
For wisdom far renowned ;

In all Etruria's colleges
Was no such Pontiff found.

And all around the portal,
And high above the wall,
Stood a great throng of people,
But sad and silent all ;

Young lads, and stooping elders
That might not bear the mail,
Matrons with lips that quivered,
And maids with faces pale.

Since the first gleam of daylight,
Sempronius had not ceased
To listen for the rushing
Of horse-hoofs from the east.

158 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

The mist of eve was rising,
The sun was hastening down,
When he was aware of a princely pair
Fast pricking towards the town.
So like they were, man never
Saw twins so like before ;
Red with gore their armour was,
Their steeds were red with gore.

XXXVIII.

‘ Hail to the great Asylum !
Hail to the hill-tops seven !
Hail to the fire that burns for aye,
And the shield that fell from heaven !
This day, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum
Was fought a glorious fight.
To-morrow your Dictator
Shall bring in triumph home

The spoils of thirty cities
To deck the shrines of Rome !’

XXXIX.

Then burst from that great concourse
A shout that shook the towers,
And some ran north, and some ran
south,
Crying, ‘ The day is ours !’
But on rode the strange horsemen,
With slow and lordly pace ;
And none who saw their bearing
Durst ask their name or race.
On rode they to the Forum,
While laurel-boughs and flowers,
From house-tops and from windows,
Fell on their crests in showers.
When they drew nigh to Vesta,
They vaulted down amain,
And washed their horses in the well
That springs by Vesta’s fane.

160 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And straight again they mounted,
And rode to Vesta's door ;
Then, like a blast, away they passed,
And no man saw them more.

XL.

And all the people trembled,
And pale grew every cheek ;
And Sergius the High Pontiff
Alone found voice to speak :
' The gods who live for ever
Have fought for Rome to-day !
These be the Great Twin Brethren
To whom the Dorians pray.
Back comes the Chief in triumph,
Who, in the hour of fight,
Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren
In harness on his right.
Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billows and through gales,

If once the Great Twin Brethren
Sit shining on the sails.
Wherefore they washed their horses
In Vesta's holy well,
Wherefore they rode to Vesta's
door,
I know, but may not tell.
Here, hard by Vesta's Temple,
Build we a stately dome
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome.
And when the months returning
Bring back this day of fight,
The proud Ides of Quintilis,
Marked evermore with white,
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Let all the people throng,
With chaplets and with offerings,
With music and with song ;
And let the doors and windows
Be hung with garlands all,

And let the Knights be summoned
To Mars without the wall :
Thence let them ride in purple
With joyous trumpet-sound,
Each mounted on his war-horse,
And each with olive crowned ;
And pass in solemn order
Before the sacred dome,
Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome !’

VIRGINIA.

A COLLECTION consisting exclusively of war-songs would give an imperfect, or rather an erroneous, notion of the spirit of the old Latin ballads. The Patricians, during more than a century after the expulsion of the Kings, held all the high military commands. A Plebeian, even though, like Lucius Siccus, he were distinguished by his valour and knowledge of war, could serve only in subordinate posts. A minstrel, therefore, who wished to celebrate the early triumphs of his country, could hardly take any but Patricians for his heroes. The warriors who are mentioned in the two preceding lays,

Horatius, Lartius, Herminius, Aulus Posthumius, Æbutius Elva, Sempronius Atratinus, Valerius Poplicola, were all members of the dominant order; and a poet who was singing their praises, whatever his own political opinions might be, would naturally abstain from insulting the class to which they belonged, and from reflecting on the system which had placed such men at the head of the legions of the Commonwealth.

But there was a class of compositions in which the great families were by no means so courteously treated. No parts of early Roman history are richer with poetical colouring than those which relate to the long contest between the privileged houses and the commonalty. The population of Rome was, from a very early period,

divided into hereditary castes, which, indeed, readily united to repel foreign enemies, but which regarded each other, during many years, with bitter animosity. Between those castes there was a barrier hardly less strong than that which, at Venice, parted the members of the Great Council from their countrymen. In some respects, indeed, the line which separated an Icilius or a Duilius from a Posthumius or a Fabius was even more deeply marked than that which separated the rower of a gondola from a Contarini or a Morosini. At Venice the distinction was merely civil. At Rome it was both civil and religious. Among the grievances under which the Plebeians suffered, three were felt as peculiarly severe. They were excluded from the highest magistracies, they were ex-

cluded from all share in the public lands; and they were ground down to the dust by partial and barbarous legislation touching pecuniary contracts. The ruling class in Rome was a moneyed class; and it made and administered the laws with a view solely to its own interest. Thus the relation between lender and borrower was mixed up with the relation between sovereign and subject. The great men held a large portion of the community in dependence by means of advances at enormous usury. The law of debt, framed by creditors, and for the protection of creditors, was the most horrible that has ever been known among men. The liberty, and even the life, of the insolvent were at the mercy of the Patrician money-lenders. Children often became slaves in consequence of

the misfortunes of their parents. The debtor was imprisoned, not in a public gaol under the care of impartial public functionaries, but in a private work-house belonging to the creditor. Frightful stories were told respecting these dungeons. It was said that torture and brutal violation were common ; that tight stocks, heavy chains, scanty measures of food, were used to punish wretches guilty of nothing but poverty ; and that brave soldiers, whose breasts were covered with honourable scars, were often marked still more deeply on the back by the scourges of high-born usurers.

The Plebeians were, however, not wholly without constitutional rights. From an early period they had been admitted to some share of political power. They were enrolled each in his

century, and were allowed a share, considerable though not proportioned to their numerical strength, in the disposal of those high dignities from which they were themselves excluded. Thus their position bore some resemblance to that of the Irish Catholics during the interval between the year 1792 and the year 1829. The Plebeians had also the privilege of annually appointing officers, named Tribunes, who had no active share in the government of the Commonwealth, but who, by degrees, acquired a power formidable even to the ablest and most resolute Consuls and Dictators. The person of the Tribune was inviolable: and though he could directly effect little, he could obstruct everything.

During more than a century after the institution of the Tribuneship,

the Commons struggled manfully for the removal of the grievances under which they laboured ; and, in spite of many checks and reverses, succeeded in wringing concession after concession from the stubborn aristocracy. At length in the year of the city 378, both parties mustered their whole strength for their last and most desperate conflict. The popular and active Tribune, Caius Licinius, proposed the three memorable laws which are called by his name, and which were intended to redress the three great evils of which the Plebeians complained. He was supported with eminent ability and firmness by his colleague, Lucius Sextius. The struggle appears to have been the fiercest that ever in any community terminated without an appeal to arms. If such a contest had raged in any

Greek city, the streets would have run with blood. But, even in the paroxysms of faction, the Roman retained his gravity, his respect for law, and his tenderness for the lives of his fellow-citizens. Year after year Licinius and Sextius were re-elected Tribunes. Year after year, if the narrative which has come down to us is to be trusted, they continued to exert, to the full extent, their power of stopping the whole machine of government. No curule magistrates could be chosen; no military muster could be held. We know too little of the state of Rome in those days to be able to conjecture how, during that long anarchy, the peace was kept, and ordinary justice administered between man and man. The animosity of both parties rose to the greatest height. The excitement, we

may well suppose, would have been peculiarly intense at the annual election of Tribunes. On such occasions there can be little doubt that the great families did all that could be done, by threats and caresses, to break the union of the Plebeians. That union, however, proved indissoluble. At length the good cause triumphed. The Licinian laws were carried. Lucius Sextius was the first Plebeian Consul, Caius Licinius the third.

The results of this great change were singularly happy and glorious. Two centuries of prosperity, harmony, and victory followed the reconciliation of the orders. Men who remembered Rome engaged in waging petty wars almost within sight of the Capitol lived to see her the mistress of Italy. While the disabilities of the Plebeians con-

tinued, she was scarcely able to maintain her ground against the Volscians and Hernicans. When those disabilities were removed, she rapidly became more than a match for Carthage and Macedon.

During the great Licinian contest the Plebeian poets were, doubtless, not silent. Even in modern times songs have been by no means without influence on public affairs; and we may therefore infer that, in a society where printing was unknown, and where books were rare, a pathetic or humorous party-ballad must have produced effects such as we can but faintly conceive. It is certain that satirical poems were common at Rome from a very early period. The rustics, who lived at a distance from the seat of government, and took little part in the

strife of factions, gave vent to their petty local animosities in coarse Fescennine verse. The lampoons of the city were doubtless of a higher order; and their sting was early felt by the nobility. For in the Twelve Tables, long before the time of the Licinian laws, a severe punishment was denounced against the citizen who should compose or recite verses reflecting on another.* Satire is, indeed, the only sort of composition in which the Latin poets, whose works have come down to us, were not mere imitators of foreign models; and it is therefore the only sort of composition in which they have

* Cicero justly infers from this law that there had been early Latin poets whose works had been lost before his time. ‘Quamquam id quidem etiam xii tabulæ declarant, condi jam tum solitum esse carmen, quod ne liceret fieri ad alterius injuriam lege sanxerunt.’—*Tusc.* iv. 2.

never been rivalled. It was not, like their tragedy, their comedy, their epic and lyric poetry, a hothouse plant which, in return for assiduous and skilful culture, gave only scanty and sickly fruits. It was hardy and full of sap; and in all the various juices which it yielded might be distinguished the flavour of the Ausonian soil. ‘Satire,’ says Quintilian, with just pride, ‘is all our own.’ Satire sprang, in truth, naturally from the constitution of the Roman government and from the spirit of the Roman people; and, though at length subjected to metrical rules derived from Greece, retained to the last an essentially Roman character. Lucilius was the earliest satirist whose works were held in esteem under the Cæsars. But many years before Lucilius was born, Nævius had been flung

into a dungeon, and guarded there with circumstances of unusual rigour, on account of the bitter lines in which he had attacked the great Cæcilian family.* The genius and spirit of the Roman satirist survived the liberty of their country, and were not extinguished by the cruel despotism of the Julian and Flavian Emperors. The great poet who told the story of Domitian's turbot was the legitimate successor of those forgotten minstrels whose songs animated the factions of the infant Republic.

These minstrels, as Niebuhr has remarked, appear to have generally taken the popular side. We can hardly be mistaken in supposing that, at the great crisis of the civil conflict, they employed themselves in versifying all

* Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus*. Aulus Gellius, iii. 3.

the most powerful and virulent speeches of the Tribunes, and in heaping abuse on the leaders of the aristocracy. Every personal defect, every domestic scandal, every tradition dishonourable to a noble house, would be sought out, brought into notice, and exaggerated. The illustrious head of the aristocratical party, Marcus Furius Camillus, might perhaps be, in some measure, protected by his venerable age and by the memory of his great services to the State. But Appius Claudius Crassus enjoyed no such immunity. He was descended from a line of ancestors distinguished by their haughty demeanour, and by the inflexibility with which they had withstood all the demands of the Plebeian order. While the political conduct and the deportment of the Claudian nobles drew upon

them the fiercest public hatred, they were accused of wanting, if any credit is due to the early history of Rome, a class of qualities which, in the military commonwealth, is sufficient to cover a multitude of offences. The chiefs of the family appear to have been eloquent, versed in civil business, and learned after the fashion of their age; but in war they were not distinguished by skill or valour. Some of them, as if conscious where their weakness lay, had, when filling the highest magistracies, taken internal administration as their department of public business, and left the military command to their colleagues.* One of them had been intrusted with an army, and had failed ignominiously.† None of them

* In the years of the city 260, 304, and 330.

† In the year of the city 282.

had been honoured with a triumph. None of them had achieved any martial exploit, such as those by which Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, Titus Quinctius Capitolinus, Aulus Cornelius Cossus, and, above all, the great Camillus, had extorted the reluctant esteem of the multitude. During the Licinian conflict, Appius Claudius Crassus signalled himself by the ability and severity with which he harangued against the two great agitators. He would naturally, therefore, be the favourite mark of the Plebeian satirists; nor would they have been at a loss to find a point on which he was open to attack.

His grandfather, called, like himself, Appius Claudius, had left a name as much detested as that of Sextus Tarquinius. This elder Appius had been Consul more than seventy years before

the introduction of the Licinian laws. By availing himself of a singular crisis in public feeling, he had obtained the consent of the Commons to the abolition of the Tribuneship, and had been the chief of that Council of Ten to which the whole direction of the State had been committed. In a few months his administration had become universally odious. It had been swept away by an irresistible outbreak of popular fury; and its memory was still held in abhorrence by the whole city. The immediate cause of the downfall of this execrable government was said to have been an attempt made by Appius Claudius upon the chastity of a beautiful young girl of humble birth. The story ran that the Decemvir, unable to succeed by bribes and solicitations, resorted to an outrageous act

of tyranny. A vile dependent of the Claudian house laid claim to the damsel as his slave. The cause was brought before the tribunal of Appius. The wicked magistrate, in defiance of the clearest proofs, gave judgment for the claimant. But the girl's father, a brave soldier, saved her from servitude and dishonour by stabbing her to the heart in the sight of the whole Forum. That blow was the signal for a general explosion. Camp and city rose at once ; the Ten were pulled down ; the Tribuneship was re-established ; and Appius escaped the hands of the executioner only by a voluntary death.

It can hardly be doubted that a story so admirably adapted to the purposes both of the poet and of the demagogue would be eagerly seized upon by minstrels burning with hatred against

the Patrician order, against the Claudian house, and especially against the grandson and namesake of the infamous Decemvir.

In order that the reader may judge fairly of these fragments of the lay of Virginia, he must imagine himself a Plebeian who has just voted for the re-election of Sextius and Licinius. All the power of the Patricians has been exerted to throw out the two great champions of the Commons. Every Posthumius, Æmilius, and Cornelius has used his influence to the utmost. Debtors have been let out of the work-houses on condition of voting against the men of the people: clients have been posted to hiss and interrupt the favourite candidates: Appius Claudius Crassus has spoken with more than his usual eloquence and asperity: all has

been in vain ; Licinius and Sextius have a fifth time carried all the tribes : work is suspended : the booths are closed : the Plebeians bear on their shoulders the two champions of liberty through the Forum. Just at this moment it is announced that a popular poet, a zealous adherent of the Tribunes, has made a new song which will cut the Claudian nobles to the heart. The crowd gathers round him, and calls on him to recite it. He takes his stand on the spot where, according to tradition, Virginia, more than seventy years ago, was seized by the pandar of Appius, and he begins his story.

VIRGINIA.

FRAGMENTS OF A LAY SUNG IN THE
FORUM ON THE DAY WHEREON
LUCIUS SEXTIUS SEXTINUS LATERA-
NUS AND CAIUS LICINIUS CALVUS
STOLO WERE ELECTED TRIBUNES
OF THE COMMONS THE FIFTH TIME
IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY
CCCLXXXII.

YE good men of the Commons, with
loving hearts and true,
Who stand by the bold Tribunes that
still have stood by you,
Come, make a circle round me, and
mark my tale with care,
A tale of what Rome once hath borne,
of what Rome yet may bear.

184 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

This is no Grecian fable, of fountains
running wine,

Of maids with snaky tresses, or sailors
turned to swine.

Here, in this very Forum, under the
noonday sun,

In sight of all the people, the bloody
deed was done.

Old men still creep among us who saw
that fearful day,

Just seventy years and seven ago,
when the wicked Ten bare sway.

Of all the wicked Ten still the names
are held accursed,

And of all the wicked Ten Appius
Claudius was the worst.

He stalked along the Forum like King
Tarquin in his pride :

Twelve axes waited on him, six march-
ing on a side ;

The townsmen shrank to right and
left, and eyed askance with
fear

His lowering brow, his curling mouth,
which always seemed to sneer ;

That brow of hate, that mouth of
scorn, marks all the kindred still ;

For never was there Claudius yet but
wished the Commons ill :

Nor lacks he fit attendance ; for close
behind his heels,

With outstretched chin and crouching
pace, the client Marcus steals,

His loins girt up to run with speed, be
the errand what it may,

And the smile flickering on his cheek,
for aught his lord may say.

Such varlets pimp and jest for hire
among the lying Greeks :

Such varlets still are paid to hoot
when brave Licinius speaks.

186 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzz-
ing flies will crowd ;

Where'er ye fling the carrion, the
raven's croak is loud ;

Where'er down Tiber garbage floats,
the greedy pike ye see ;

And wheresoe'er such lord is found,
such client still will be.

Just then, as through one cloudless
chink in a black stormy sky
Shines out the dewy morning-star, a
fair young girl came by.

With her small tablets in her hand,
and her satchel on her arm,

Homeshe went bounding from the school,
nor dreamed of shame or harm ;

And past those dreaded axes she inno-
cently ran,

With bright, frank brow that had not
learned to blush at gaze of man ;

And up the Sacred Street she turned,
and, as she danced along,
She warbled gaily to herself lines of
the good old song,
How for a sport the princes came spur-
ring from the camp,
And found Lucrece, combing the fleece,
under the midnight lamp.
The maiden sang as sings the lark,
when up he darts his flight,
From his nest in the green April corn,
to meet the morning light ;
And Appius heard her sweet young
voice, and saw her sweet young face,
And loved her with the accursed love
of his accursed race,
And all along the Forum and up the
Sacred Street
His vulture eye pursued the trip of
those small glancing feet.

.

188 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Over the Alban mountains the light
of morning broke ;

From all the roofs of the Seven Hills
curled the thin wreaths of
smoke :

The city-gates were opened ; the Forum
all alive,

With buyers and with sellers was
humming like a hive :

Blithely on brass and timber the crafts-
man's stroke was ringing,

And blithely o'er her panniers the
market-girl was singing,

And blithely young Virginia came smil-
ing from her home :

Ah ! woe for young Virginia, the sweet-
est maid in Rome !

With her small tablets in her hand,
and her satchel on her arm,

Forth she went bounding to the school,
nor dreamed of shame or harm.

She crossed the Forum shining with
stalls in alleys gay,
And just had reached the very spot
whereon I stand this day,
When up the varlet Marcus came ; not
such as when erewhile
He crouched behind his patron's heels
with the true client smile :
He came with lowering forehead,
swollen features, and clenched
fist,
And strode across Virginia's path, and
caught her by the wrist.
Hard strove the frightened maiden, and
screamed with look aghast ;
And at her scream from right and left
the folk came running fast ;
The money-changer Crispus, with his
thin silver hairs,
And Hanno from the stately booth
glittering with Punic wares,

190 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And the strong smith Muræna, grasp-
ing a half-forged brand,

And Volero the flesher, his cleaver in
his hand.

All came in wrath and wonder ; for all
knew that fair child ;

And, as she passed them twice a
day all kissed their hands and
smiled ;

And the strong smith Muræna gave
Marcus such a blow,

The caitiff reeled three paces back,
and let the maiden go.

Yet glared he fiercely round him, and
growled in harsh, fell tone,

‘ She’s mine, and I will have her : I seek
but for mine own :

She is my slave, born in my house,
and stolen away and sold,

The year of the sore sickness, ere she
was twelve hours old.

'Twas in the sad September, the month
of wail and fright,

Two augurs were borne forth that
morn ; the Consul died ere night.

I wait on Appius Claudius, I waited on
his sire :

Let him who works the client wrong
beware the patron's ire !'

So spake the varlet Marcus ; and
dread and silence came

On all the people at the sound of the
great Claudian name.

For then there was no Tribune to speak
the word of might,

Which makes the rich man tremble,
and guards the poor man's right.

There was no brave Licinius, no honest
Sextus then ;

But all the city, in great fear, obeyed
the wicked Ten.

192 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Yet ere the varlet Marcus again might
seize the maid,
Who clung tight to Muræna's skirt, and
sobbed, and shrieked for aid,
Forth through the throng of gazers
the young Icilius pressed,
And stamped his foot, and rent his
gown, and smote upon his breast,
And sprang upon that column, by many
a minstrel sung,
Whereon three mouldering helmets,
three rusting swords, are hung.
And beckoned to the people, and in
bold voice and clear
Poured thick and fast the burning
words which tyrants quake to hear.

‘ Now by your children's cradles,
now by your fathers' graves,
Be men to-day, Quirites, or be for
ever slaves !

For this did Servius give us laws ? For
this did Lucrece bleed ?

For this was the great vengeance
wrought on Tarquin's evil seed ?

For this did those false sons make red
the axes of their sire ?

For this did Scævola's right hand hiss
in the Tuscan fire ?

Shall the vile fox-earth awe the race
that stormed the lion's den ?

Shall we, who could not brook
one lord, crouch to the wicked
Ten ?

Oh for that ancient spirit which curbed
the Senate's will !

Oh for the tents which in old time
whitened the Sacred Hill !

In those brave days our fathers stood
firmly side by side ;

They faced the Marcian fury ; they
tamed the Fabian pride :

194 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

They drove the fiercest Quinctius an
outcast forth from Rome ;

They sent the haughtiest Claudius with
shivered fasces home.

But what their care bequeathed us our
madness flung away :

All the ripe fruit of threescore years
was blighted in a day.

Exult, ye proud Patricians ! The hard-
fought fight is o'er.

We strove for honours—'twas in vain :
for freedom—'tis no more.

No crier to the polling summons the
eager throng ;

No Tribune breathes the word of might
that guards the weak from wrong.

Our very hearts, that were so high,
sink down beneath your will.

Riches, and lands, and power, and
state—ye have them :—keep them
still.

Still keep the holy fillets ; still keep the
purple gown,

The axes, and the curule chair, the
car, and laurel crown.

Still press us for your cohorts, and,
when the fight is done,

Still fill your garners from the soil
which our good swords have
won.

Still, like a spreading ulcer, which
leechcraft may not cure,

Let your foul usance eat away the sub-
stance of the poor.

Still let your haggard debtors bear all
their fathers bore ;

Still let your dens of torment be noisome
as of yore ;

No fire when Tiber freezes ; no air in
dog-star heat ;

And store of rods for free-born backs,
and holes for free-born feet.

196 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Heap heavier still the fetters ; bar
closer still the grate ;

Patient as sheep we yield us up unto
your cruel hate.

But, by the Shades beneath us, and
by the Gods above,

Add not unto your cruel hate your yet
more cruel love !

Have ye not graceful ladies, whose
spotless lineage springs

From Consuls, and High Pontiffs, and
ancient Alban kings ?

Ladies, who deign not on our paths to
set their tender feet,

Who from their cars look down
with scorn upon the wondering
street,

Who in Corinthian mirrors their own
proud smiles behold,

And breathe of Capuan odours, and
shine with Spanish gold ?

Then leave the poor Plebeian his single
tie to life—

The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of
sister, and of wife,

The gentle speech, the balm for all that
his vexed soul endures,

The kiss, in which he half forgets even
such a yoke as yours.

Still let the maiden's beauty swell the
father's breast with pride ;

Still let the bridegroom's arms infold
an unpolluted bride.

Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the
unutterable shame,

That turns the coward's heart to steel,
the sluggard's blood to flame,

Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye
taste of our despair,

And learn by proof, in some wild hour,
how much the wretched dare.'

.

198 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Straightway Virginius led the maid
a little space aside,
To where the reeking shambles stood,
piled up with horn and hide,
Close to yon low dark archway, where,
in a crimson flood,
Leaps down to the great sewer the
gurgling stream of blood.
Hard by, a flesher on a block had laid
his whittle down :
Virginius caught the whittle up, and
hid it in his gown.
And then his eyes grew very dim, and
his throat began to swell,
And in a hoarse, changed voice he
spake, ' Farewell, sweet child !
Farewell !
Oh ! how I loved my darling ! Though
stern I sometimes be,
To thee, thou know'st I was not so.
Who could be so to thee ?

And how my darling loved me ! How
glad she was to hear

My footstep on the threshold when I
came back last year !

And how she danced with pleasure to
see my civic crown,

And took my sword, and hung it
up, and brought me forth my
gown !

Now, all those things are over—yes,
all thy pretty ways,

Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy
snatches of old lays ;

And none will grieve when I go forth,
or smile when I return,

Or watch beside the old man's bed, or
weep upon his urn.

The house that was the happiest within
the Roman walls,

The house that envied not the wealth
of Capua's marble halls,

200 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Now, for the brightness of thy smile,
must have eternal gloom,
And for the music of thy voice, the
silence of the tomb.

The time is come. See how he points
his eager hand this way !

See how his eyes gloat on thy grief,
like a kite's upon the prey !

With all his wit, he little deems, that,
spurned, betrayed, bereft,

Thy father hath in his despair one
fearful refuge left.

He little deems that in this hand I
clutch what still can save

Thy gentle youth from taunts and
blows, the portion of the
slave ;

Yea, and from nameless evil, that
passeth taunt and blow—

Foul outrage which thou knowest not,
which thou shalt never know.

Then clasp me round the neck once more,
and give me one more kiss ;
And now, mine own dear little girl,
there is no way but this.'
With that he lifted high the steel, and
smote her in the side,
And in her blood she sank to earth,
and with one sob she died.

Then, for a little moment, all people
held their breath ;
And through the crowded Forum was
stillness as of death ;
And in another moment brake forth
from one and all
A cry as if the Volscians were coming
o'er the wall.
Some with averted faces shrieking fled
home amain ;
Some ran to call a leech ; and some ran
to lift the slain :

202 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Some felt her lips and little wrist, if
 life might there be found ;
And some tore up their garments fast,
 and strove to stanch the wound.
In vain they ran, and felt, and
 stanch'd ; for never truer blow
That good right arm had dealt in fight
 against a Volscian foe.

When Appius Claudius saw that
 deed, he shuddered and sank down,
And hid his face some little space with
 the corner of his gown,
Till, with white lips and bloodshot
 eyes, Virginius tottered nigh,
And stood before the judgment-seat,
 and held the knife on high.
' Oh ! dwellers in the nether gloom,
 avengers of the slain,
By this dear blood I cry to you, do
 right between us twain ;

And even as Appius Claudius hath
dealt by me and mine,

Deal you by Appius Claudius and all
the Claudian line ! ’

So spake the slayer of his child, and
turned, and went his way ;

But first he cast one haggard glance to
where the body lay,

And writhed, and groaned a fearful
groan, and then, with steadfast feet,

Strode right across the market-place
unto the Sacred Street.

Then up sprang Appius Claudius :

‘ Stop him ; alive or dead !

Ten thousand pounds of copper to the
man who brings his head.’

He looked upon his clients ; but none
would work his will.

He looked upon his lictors ; but they
trembled, and stood still.

And, as Virginius through the press
his way in silence cleft,
Ever the mighty multitude fell back to
right and left.
And he hath passed in safety unto his
woeful home,
And there ta'en horse to tell the camp
what deeds are done in Rome.

By this the flood of people was swollen
from every side,
And streets and porches round were
filled with that o'erflowing tide ;
And close around the body gathered a
little train
Of them that were the nearest and
dearest to the slain.
They brought a bier, and hung it with
many a cypress crown,
And gently they uplifted her, and
gently laid her down.

The face of Appius Claudius wore the
Claudian scowl and sneer,
And in the Claudian note he cried,
‘What doth this rabble here?
Have they no crafts to mind at home,
that hitherward they stray?
Ho! lictors, clear the market-place, and
fetch the corpse away!’
The voice of grief and fury till then
had not been loud;
But a deep sullen murmur wandered
among the crowd,
Like the moaning noise that goes
before the whirlwind on the
deep,
Or the growl of a fierce watch-dog but
half aroused from sleep.
But when the lictors at that word, tall
yeomen all and strong,
Each with his axe and sheaf of twigs,
went down into the throng,

Those old men say, who saw that day
of sorrow and of sin,

That in the Roman Forum was never
such a din.

The wailing, hooting, cursing, the howls
of grief and hate,

Were heard beyond the Pincian Hill,
beyond the Latin Gate.

But close around the body, where stood
the little train

Of them that were the nearest and
dearest to the slain,

No cries were there, but teeth set fast,
low whispers and black frowns,

And breaking up of benches, and gird-
ing up of gowns.

'Twas well the lictors might not pierce
to where the maiden lay,

Else surely had they been all twelve
torn limb from limb that
day.

Right glad they were to struggle back,
 blood streaming from their heads,
With axes all in splinters, and raiment
 all in shreds.

Then Appius Claudius gnawed his lip,
 and the blood left his cheek ;
And thrice he beckoned with his hand,
 and thrice he strove to speak ;
And thrice the tossing Forum set up a
 frightful yell ;

‘ See, see, thou dog ! what thou hast
 done ; and hide thy shame in
hell !

Thou that wouldst make our maidens
 slaves must first make slaves of men.
Tribunes ! Hurrah for Tribunes ! Down
 with the wicked Ten ! ’

And straightway, thick as hailstones,
 came whizzing through the air
Pebbles, and bricks, and potsherds, all
 round the curule chair :

208 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And upon Appius Claudius great fear
and trembling came ;

For never was a Claudius yet brave
against aught but shame.

Though the great houses love us not,
we own, to do them right,

That the great houses, all save
one, have borne them well in
fight.

Still Caius of Corioli, his triumphs and
his wrongs,

His vengeance and his mercy, live in
our camp-fire songs.

Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have
Gaul and Tuscan bowed ;

And Rome may bear the pride of him
of whom herself is proud.

But evermore a Claudius shrinks from
a stricken field,

And changes colour like a maid at sight
of sword and shield.

The Claudian triumphs all were won
within the city towers ;

The Claudian yoke was never pressed
on any neck but ours.

A Cossus, like a wild cat, springs ever
at the face ;

A Fabius rushes like a boar against
the shouting chase ;

But the vile Claudian litter, raging
with currish spite,

Still yelps and snaps at those who run,
still runs from those who smite.

So now 'twas seen of Appius. When
stones began to fly,

He shook and crouched, and wrung
his hands, and smote upon his
thigh.

‘ Kind clients, honest lictors, stand by
me in this fray !

Must I be torn in pieces ? Home,
home, the nearest way ! ’

While yet he spake, and looked around
with a bewildered stare,
Four sturdy lictors put their necks
beneath the curule chair ;
And fourscore clients on the left, and
fourscore on the right,
Arrayed themselves with swords and
staves, and loins girt up for fight.
But, though without or staff or sword,
so furious was the throng,
That scarce the train with might and
main could bring their lord along.
Twelve times the crowd made at
him ; five times they seized his
gown ;
Small chance was his to rise again, if
once they got him down :
And sharper came the pelting ; and
evermore the yell—
‘ Tribunes ! we will have Tribunes ! ’—
rose with a louder swell :

And the chair tossed as tosses a bark
with tattered sail

When raves the Adriatic beneath an
eastern gale,

When the Calabrian sea-marks are lost
in clouds of spume,

And the great Thunder-Cape has
donned his veil of inky gloom.

One stone hit Appius in the mouth, and
one beneath the ear ;

And ere he reached Mount Palatine, he
swooned with pain and fear.

His cursed head, that he was wont to
hold so high with pride,

Now, like a drunken man's hung
down, and swayed from side to
side ;

And when his stout retainers had
brought him to his door,

His face and neck were all one cake of
filth and clotted gore.

As Appius Claudius was that day, so
may his grandson be !

God send Rome one such other sight,
and send me there to see !

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

It can hardly be necessary to remind any reader that, according to the popular tradition, Romulus, after he had slain his grand-uncle Amulius, and restored his grandfather Numitor, determined to quit Alba, the hereditary domain of the Sylvian princes, and to found a new city. The Gods, it was added, vouchsafed the clearest signs of the favour with which they regarded the enterprise, and of the high destinies reserved for the young colony.

This event was likely to be a favourite theme of the old Latin minstrels. They would naturally attribute the project

of Romulus to some divine intimation of the power and prosperity which it was decreed that his city should attain. They would probably introduce seers foretelling the victories of unborn Consuls and Dictators, and the last great victory would generally occupy the most conspicuous place in the prediction. There is nothing strange in the supposition that the poet who was employed to celebrate the first great triumph of the Romans over the Greeks might throw his song of exultation into this form.

The occasion was one likely to excite the strongest feelings of national pride. A great outrage had been followed by a great retribution. Seven years before this time, Lucius Posthumius Megellus, who sprang from one of the noblest houses of Rome, and

had been thrice Consul, was sent ambassador to Tarentum, with charge to demand reparation for grievous injuries. The Tarentines gave him audience in their theatre, where he addressed them in such Greek as he could command, which, we may well believe, was not exactly such as Cineas would have spoken. An exquisite sense of the ridiculous belonged to the Greek character : and closely connected with this faculty was a strong propensity to flippancy and impertinence. When Posthumius placed an accent wrong, his hearers burst into a laugh. When he remonstrated, they hooted him, and called him barbarian ; and at length hissed him off the stage as if he had been a bad actor. As the grave Roman retired, a buffoon, who, from his constant drunkenness, was nicknamed the

Pint-pot, came up with gestures of the grossest indecency, and bespattered the senatorial gown with filth. Posthumius turned round to the multitude, and held up the gown, as if appealing to the universal law of nations. The sight only increased the insolence of the Tarentines. They clapped their hands, and set up a shout of laughter which shook the theatre. ‘Men of Tarentum,’ said Posthumius, ‘it will take not a little blood to wash this gown.’*

Rome, in consequence of this insult, declared war against the Tarentines. The Tarentines sought for allies beyond the Ionian Sea. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, came to their help with a large army; and, for the first time, the two great nations of antiquity were fairly matched against each other.

* Dion. Hal. De Legationibus.

The fame of Greece in arms, as well as in arts, was then at the height. Half a century earlier, the career of Alexander had excited the admiration and terror of all nations from the Ganges to the Pillars of Hercules. Royal houses, founded by Macedonian captains, still reigned at Antioch and Alexandria. That barbarian warriors, led by barbarian chiefs, should win a pitched battle against Greek valour guided by Greek science, seemed as incredible as it would now seem that the Burmese or the Siamese should, in the open plain, put to flight an equal number of the best English troops. The Tarentines were convinced that their countrymen were irresistible in war; and this conviction had emboldened them to treat with the grossest indignity one whom they re-

garded as the representative of an inferior race. Of the Greek generals then living, Pyrrhus was indisputably the first. Among the troops who were trained in the Greek discipline, his Epirotes ranked high. His expedition to Italy was a turning-point in the history of the world. He found there a people who, far inferior to the Athenians and Corinthians in the fine arts, in the speculative sciences, and in all the refinements of life, were the best soldiers on the face of the earth. Their arms, their gradations of rank, their order of battle, their method of intrenchment, were all of Latian origin, and had all been gradually brought near to perfection, not by the study of foreign models, but by the genius and experience of many generations of great native commanders. The first

words which broke from the king, when his practised eye had surveyed the Roman encampment, were full of meaning :—‘ These barbarians,’ he said, ‘ have nothing barbarous in their military arrangements.’ He was at first victorious ; for his own talents were superior to those of the captains who were opposed to him ; and the Romans were not prepared for the onset of the elephants of the East, which were then for the first time seen in Italy—moving mountains, with long snakes for hands.* But the victories of the Epirotes were fiercely disputed, dearly purchased, and altogether unprofitable. At length, Manius Curius Dentatus, who had in his first Consulship won two triumphs, was again placed at the

* *Anguimanus* is the old Latin epithet for an elephant. *Lucretius*, ii. 538, v. 1302.

head of the Roman Commonwealth, and sent to encounter the invaders. A great battle was fought near Beneventum. Pyrrhus was completely defeated. He repassed the sea ; and the world learned, with amazement, that a people had been discovered, who, in fair fighting, were superior to the best troops that had been drilled on the system of Parmenio and Antigonus.

The conquerors had a good right to exult in their success ; for their glory was all their own. They had not learned from their enemy how to conquer him. It was with their own national arms, and in their own national battle-array, that they had overcome weapons and tactics long believed to be invincible. The pilum and the broadsword had vanquished the Macedonian spear. The legion had broken

the Macedonian phalanx. Even the elephants, when the surprise produced by their first appearance was over, could cause no disorder in the steady yet flexible battalions of Rome.

It is said by Florus, and may easily be believed, that the triumph far surpassed in magnificence any that Rome had previously seen. The only spoils which Papirius Cursor and Fabius Maximus could exhibit were flocks and herds, waggons of rude structure, and heaps of spears and helmets. But now, for the first time, the riches of Asia and the arts of Greece adorned a Roman pageant. Plate, fine stuffs, costly furniture, rare animals, exquisite paintings and sculptures, formed part of the procession. At the banquet would be assembled a crowd of warriors and

statesmen, among whom Manius Curius Dentatus would take the highest room. Caius Fabricius Luscinus, then, after two Consulships and two triumphs, Censor of the Commonwealth, would doubtless occupy a place of honour at the board. In situations less conspicuous probably lay some of those who were, a few years later, the terror of Carthage; Caius Duilius, the founder of the maritime greatness of his country; Marcus Atilius Regulus, who owed to defeat a renown far higher than that which he had derived from his victories; and Caius Lutatius Catulus, who, while suffering from a grievous wound, fought the great battle of the Ægates, and brought the first Punic war to a triumphant close. It is impossible to recount the names of these eminent citizens, without reflecting that they

were all, without exception, Plebeians, and would, but for the ever-memorable struggle maintained by Caius Licinius and Lucius Sextius, have been doomed to hide in obscurity, or to waste in civil broils, the capacity and energy which prevailed against Pyrrhus and Hamilcar.

On such a day we may suppose that the patriotic enthusiasm of a Latin poet would vent itself in reiterated shouts of *Io triumphe*, such as were uttered by Horace on a far less exciting occasion, and in boasts resembling those which Virgil put into the mouth of Anchises. The superiority of some foreign nations, and especially of the Greeks, in the lazy arts of peace, would be admitted with disdainful candour; but pre-eminence in all the qualities which fit a people to subdue

and govern mankind would be claimed for the Romans.

The following lay belongs to the latest age of Latin ballad-poetry. Nævius and Livius Andronicus were probably among the children whose mothers held them up to see the chariot of Curius go by. The minstrel who sang on that day might possibly have lived to read the first hexameters of Ennius, and to see the first comedies of Plautus. His poem, as might be expected, shows a much wider acquaintance with the geography, manners, and productions of remote nations, than would have been found in compositions of the age of Camillus. But he troubles himself little about dates, and having heard travellers talk with admiration of the Colossus of Rhodes, and of the structures and gardens with which

the Macedonian kings of Syria had embellished their residence on the banks of the Orontes, he has never thought of inquiring whether these things existed in the age of Romulus.

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE BANQUET IN THE
CAPITOL, ON THE DAY WHEREON
MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS, A
SECOND TIME CONSUL, TRIUMPHED
OVER KING PYRRHUS AND THE
TARENTINES, IN THE YEAR OF THE
CITY CCCCLXXIX.

I.

Now slain is King Amulius,
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.
Slain is the Pontiff Camers,
Who spake the words of doom :
'The children to the Tiber :
The mother to the tomb.'

II.

In Alba's lake no fisher
His net to-day is flinging :
On the dark rind of Alba's oaks
To-day no axe is ringing :
The yoke hangs o'er the manger :
The scythe lies in the hay :
Through all the Alban villages
No work is done to-day.

III.

And every Alban burgher
Hath donned his whitest gown ;
And every head in Alba
Weareth a poplar crown ;
And every Alban door-post
With boughs and flowers is gay :
For to-day the dead are living ;
The lost are found to-day.

IV.

They were doomed by a bloody king :
They were doomed by a lying priest :
They were cast on the raging flood :
They were tracked by the raging beast :
Raging beast and raging flood
Alike have spared the prey ;
And to-day the dead are living ;
The lost are found to-day.

V.

The troubled river knew them,
And smoothed his yellow foam,
And gently rocked the cradle
That bore the fate of Rome.
The ravening she-wolf knew them,
And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
Rich with raw flesh and gore.

Twenty winters, twenty springs,
 Since then have rolled away ;
 And to-day the dead are living :
 The lost are found to-day.

VI.

Blithe it was to see the twins,
 Right goodly youths and tall,
 Marching from Alba Longa
 To their old grandsire's hall.
 Along their path fresh garlands
 Are hung from tree to tree ;
 Before them stride the pipers,
 Piping a note of glee.

VII.

On the right goes Romulus,
 With arms to the elbows red,
 And in his hand a broadsword,
 And on the blade a head—

A head in an iron helmet,
 With horse-hair hanging down,
 A shaggy head, a swarthy head,
 Fixed in a ghastly frown—
 The head of King Amulius
 Of the great Sylvian line,
 Who reigned in Alba Longa,
 On the throne of Aventine.

VIII.

On the left side goes Remus.
 With wrists and fingers red,
 And in his hand a boar-spear,
 And on the point a head—
 A wrinkled head and aged,
 With silver beard and hair,
 And holy fillets round it,
 Such as the pontiffs wear—
 The head of ancient Camers,
 Who spake the words of doom :

‘The children to the Tiber ;
The mother to the tomb.’

IX.

Two and two behind the twins
Their trusty comrades go,
Four and forty valiant men,
With club, and axe, and bow.
On each side every hamlet
Pours forth its joyous crowd,
Shouting lads and baying dogs
And children laughing loud,
And old men weeping fondly
As Rhea’s boys go by,
And maids who shriek to see the heads,
Yet, shrieking, press more nigh.

X.

So they marched along the lake ;
They marched by fold and stall,

By corn-field and by vineyard,
Unto the old man's hall.

XI.

In the hall-gate sate Capys,
Capys, the sightless seer ;
From head to foot he trembled
As Romulus drew near.
And up stood stiff his thin white hair,
And his blind eyes flashed fire :
' Hail ! foster child of the wonderful
nurse !
Hail ! son of the wonderful sire !

XII.

' But thou—what dost thou here
In the old man's peaceful hall ?
What doth the eagle in the coop,
The bison in the stall ?

Our corn fills many a garner ;
Our vines clasp many a tree ;
Our flocks are white on many a hill,
But these are not for thee.

XIII.

‘ For thee no treasure ripens
In the Tartessian mine :
For thee no ship brings precious bales
Across the Libyan brine :
Thou shalt not drink from amber ;
Thou shalt not rest on down ;
Arabia shall not steep thy locks,
Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.

XIV.

‘ Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man’s seed are born,
Whom woman’s milk hath fed.

234 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest ;
Thou, that art sprung from the War-
god's loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf's
breast.

XV.

' From sunrise unto sunset
All earth shall hear thy fame :
A glorious city thou shalt build,
And name it by thy name :
And there, unquenched through ages,
Like Vesta's sacred fire,
Shall live the spirit of thy nurse,
The spirit of thy sire.

XVI.

' The ox toils through the furrow,
Obedient to the goad ;

The patient ass, up flinty paths,
Plods with his weary load :
With whine and bound the spaniel
His master's whistle hears ;
And the sheep yields her patiently
To the loud clashing shears.

XVII.

‘ But thy nurse will hear no master ;
Thy nurse will bear no load ;
And woe to them that shear her,
And woe to them that goad !
When all the pack, loud baying,
Her bloody lair surrounds,
She dies in silence, biting hard,
Amidst the dying hounds.

XVIII.

‘ Pomona loves the orchard ;
And Liber loves the vine ;

236 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

And Pales loves the straw-built shed
Warm with the breath of kine ;
And Venus loves the whispers
Of plighted youth and maid,
In April's ivory moonlight
Beneath the chestnut shade.

XIX.

' But thy father loves the clashing
Of broadsword and of shield :
He loves to drink the steam that reeks
From the fresh battlefield :
He smiles a smile more dreadful
Than his own dreadful frown,
When he sees the thick black cloud of
smoke
Go up from the conquered town.

XX.

' And such as is the War-god,
The author of thy line,

And such as she who suckled thee,
Even such be thou and thine.
Leave to the soft Campanian
His baths and his perfumes ;
Leave to the sordid race of Tyre
Their dyeing-vats and looms :
Leave to the sons of Carthage
The rudder and the oar :
Leave to the Greek his marble Nymphs
And scrolls of wordy lore.

XXI.

‘ Thine, Roman, is the pilum ;
Roman, the sword is thine,
The even trench, the bristling mound,
The legion’s ordered line ;
And thine the wheels of triumph,
Which with their laurelled train
Move slowly up the shouting streets
To Jove’s eternal fane.

XXII.

‘ Beneath thy yoke the Volscian
Shall veil his lofty brow :
Soft Capua’s curled revellers
Before thy chairs shall bow :
The Lucumoes of Arnus
Shall quake thy rods to see ;
And the proud Samnite’s heart of steel
Shall yield to only thee.

XXIII.

‘ The Gaul shall come against thee
From the land of snow and night :
Thou shalt give his fair-haired armies
To the raven and the kite.

XXIV.

‘ The Greek shall come against thee,
The conqueror of the East.

Beside him stalks to battle
 The huge earth-shaking beast,
 The beast on whom the castle
 With all its guards doth stand,
 The beast who hath between his eyes
 The serpent for a hand.
 First march the bold Epirotes,
 Wedged close with shield and spear ;
 And the ranks of false Tarentum
 Are glittering in the rear.

XXV.

‘ The ranks of false Tarentum
 Like hunted sheep shall fly :
 In vain the bold Epirotes
 Shall round their standards die :
 And Apennine’s grey vultures
 Shall have a noble feast
 On the fat and the eyes
 Of the huge earth-shaking beast.

XXVI.

‘ Hurrah ! for the good weapons
That keep the War-god’s land.
Hurrah ! for Rome’s stout pilum
In a stout Roman hand.
Hurrah ! for Rome’s short broadsword,
That through the thick array
Of levelled spears and serried shields
Hews deep its gory way.

XXVII.

‘ Hurrah ! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah ! for the wan captives
That pass in endless file.
Ho ! bold Epirotes, whither
Hath the Red King ta’en flight ?
Ho ! dogs of false Tarentum.
Is not the gown washed white ?

XXVIII.

‘ Hurrah ! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah ! for the rich dye of Tyre,
And the fine web of Nile,
The helmets gay with plumage,
Torn from the pheasant’s wings,
The belts set thick with starry gems
That shone on Indian kings,
The urns of massy silver,
The goblets rough with gold,
The many coloured tablets bright
With loves and wars of old,
The stone that breathes and struggles,
The brass that seems to speak ;—
Such cunning they who dwell on high
Have given unto the Greek.

XXIX.

• Hurrah ! for Manius Curius,
The bravest son of Rome,
Thrice in utmost need sent forth,
Thrice drawn in triumph home.
Weave, weave for Manius Curius
The third embroidered gown ;
Make ready the third lofty car,
And twine the third green crown ;
And yoke the steeds of Rosea
With necks like a bended bow,
And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,
The bull as white as snow.

XXX.

‘ Blest and thrice blest the Roman
Who sees Rome's brightest day,
Who sees that long victorious pomp
Wind down the Sacred Way,

And through the bellowing Forum,
And round the Suppliant's Grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
Of Capitolian Jove.

XXXI.

' Then where, o'er two bright havens
The towers of Corinth frown ;
Where the gigantic King of Day
On his own Rhodes looks down ;
Where soft Orontes murmurs
Beneath the laurel shades ;
Where Nile reflects the endless length
Of dark-red colonnades ;
Where in the still deep water,
Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristles the dusky forest
Of Byrsa's thousand masts ;
Where fur-clad hunters wander
Amidst the northern ice ;

244 LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

Where through the sand of morning-
land

The camel bears the spice ;
Where Atlas flings his shadow
Far o'er the western foam,
Shall be great fear on all who hear
The mighty name of Rome.'

THE BATTLE OF MONCONTOUR.

(1824.)

Oh, weep for Moncontour ! Oh ! weep
for the hour,
When the children of darkness and
evil had power,
When the horsemen of Valois trium-
phantly trod
On the bosoms that bled for their
rights and their God.

Oh, weep for Moncontour ! Oh ! weep
for the slain,
Who for faith and for freedom lay
slaughtered in vain ;

246 BATTLE OF MONCONTOUR.

Oh, weep for the living, who linger to
bear

The renegade's shame, or the exile's
despair.

One look, one last look, to our cots
and our towers,

To the rows of our vines, and the beds
of our flowers,

To the church where the bones of our
fathers decayed,

Where we fondly had deemed that our
own would be laid.

Alas ! we must leave thee, dear desolate
home,

To the spearmen of Uri, the shavelings
of Rome,

To the serpent of Florence, the vulture
of Spain,

To the pride of Anjou, and the guile
of Lorraine.

BATTLE OF MONCONTOUR. 247

Farewell to thy fountains, farewell to
thy shades,
To the song of thy youths, and the
dance of thy maids,
To the breath of thy gardens, the hum
of thy bees,
And the long waving line of the blue
Pyrenees.

Farewell, and for ever. The priest and
the slave
May rule in the halls of the free and
the brave.
Our hearths we abandon ; our lands we
resign ;
But, Father, we kneel to no altar but
Thine.

IVRY :

A SONG OF THE HUGUENOTS.

Now glory to the Lord of Hosts, from
whom all glories are,

And glory to our Sovereign Liege,
King Henry of Navarre !

Now let there be the merry sound of
music and of dance,

Through thy corn-fields green, and
sunny vines, oh pleasant land of
France !

And thou, Rochelle, our own Rochelle,
proud city of the waters,

Again let rapture light the eyes of all
thy mourning daughters.

As thou wert constant in our ills, be
joyous in our joy,
For cold, and stiff, and still are they
who wrought thy walls annoy.
Hurrah ! Hurrah ! a single field hath
turned the chance of war,
Hurrah ! Hurrah ! for Ivry, and Henry
of Navarre.

Oh ! how our hearts were beating, when,
at the dawn of day,
We saw the army of the League drawn
out in long array ;
With all its priest-led citizens, and all
its rebel peers,
And Appenzel's stout infantry, and
Egmont's Flemish spears.
There rode the brood of false Lorraine,
the curses of our land ;
And dark Mayenne was in the midst,
a truncheon in his hand :

And, as we looked on them, we thought
of Seine's empurpled flood,
And good Coligni's hoary hair all
dabbled with his blood ;
And we cried unto the living God, who
rules the fate of war,
To fight for His own holy name, and
Henry of Navarre.

The King is come to marshal us, in
all his armour drest,
And he has bound a snow-white plume
upon his gallant crest.
He looked upon his people, and a tear
was in his eye ;
He looked upon the traitors, and his
glance was stern and high.
Right graciously he smiled on us, as
rolled from wing to wing,
Down all our line, a deafening shout,
' God save our Lord the King ! '

‘ And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall
full well he may,
‘ For never saw I promise yet of such
a bloody fray,
‘ Press where ye see my white plume
shine, amidst the ranks of war,
‘ And be your oriflamme to-day the
helmet of Navarre.’

Hurrah ! the foes are moving. Hark
to the mingled din
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum,
and roaring culverin.
The fiery Duke is pricking fast across
Saint André’s plain,
With all the hireling chivalry of Guel-
ders and Almayne,
Now by the lips of those ye love, fair
gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies—upon them
with the lance.

A thousand spurs are striking deep, a
thousand spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close
behind the snow-white crest;
And in they burst, and on they rushed,
while like a guiding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed
the helmet of Navarre.

Now, God be praised, the day is ours.
Mayenne hath turned his rein.
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter. The
Flemish count is slain.
Their ranks are breaking like thin
clouds before a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds,
and flags, and cloven mail.
And then we thought on vengeance,
and, all along our van,
'Remember St. Bartholomew,' was
passed from man to man.

But out spake gentle Henry, 'No
Frenchman is my foe :

' Down, down with every foreigner,
but let your brethren go.'

Oh ! was there ever such a knight in
friendship or in war,

As our Sovereign Lord, King Henry,
the soldier of Navarre ?

Right well fought all the Frenchmen
who fought for France to-day ;

And many a lordly banner God gave
them for a prey.

But we of the religion have borne us
best in fight ;

And the good Lord of Rosny has ta'en
the cornet white.

Our own true Maximilian the cornet
white hath ta'en,

The cornet white with crosses black,
the flag of false Lorraine.

Up with it high ; unfurl it wide ; that
all the host may know

How God hath humbled the proud
house which wrought His church
such woe.

Then on the ground, while trumpets
sound their loudest point of
war,

Fling the red shreds, a footcloth meet
for Henry of Navarre.

Ho ! maidens of Vienna ; Ho ! matrons
of Lucerne ;

Weep, weep, and rend your hair for
those who never shall return.

Ho ! Philip, send, for charity, thy
Mexican pistoles.

That Antwerp monks may sing a mass
for thy poor spearmen's souls.

Ho ! gallant nobles of the League,
look that your arms be bright ;

Ho ! burghers of Saint Genevieve, keep
watch and ward to-night.

For our God hath crushed the tyrant,
our God hath raised the slave,

And mocked the counsel of the wise, and
the valour of the brave.

Then glory to His holy name, from
whom all glories are ;

And glory to our Sovereign Lord, King
Henry of Navarre.

1824.

THE ARMADA :

A FRAGMENT.

ATTEND, all ye who list to hear our
noble England's praise ;
I tell of the thrice famous deeds she
wrought in ancient days,
When that great fleet invincible against
her bore in vain
The richest spoils of Mexico, the
stoutest hearts of Spain.

It was about a lovely close of a warm
summer day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship
full sail to Plymouth Bay ;
Her crew hath seen Castile's black fleet,
beyond Aurigny's isle.

At earliest twilight, on the waves lie
heaving many a mile.

At sunrise she escaped their van, by
God's especial grace ;

And the tall Pinta, till the noon, had
held her close in chase.

Forthwith a guard at every gun was
placed along the wall ;

The beacon blazed upon the roof of
Edgumbe's lofty hall ;

Many a light fishing-bark put out to
pry along the coast,

And with loose rein and bloody spur
rode inland many a post.

With his white hair unbonneted, the
stout old sheriff comes ;

Behind him march the halber-
diers ; before him sound the
drums ;

His yeomen round the market cross
make clear an ample space ;

For there behoves him to set up the
standard of Her Grace.

And haughtily the trumpets peal,
and gaily dance the bells,

As slow upon the labouring wind the
royal blazon swells.

Look how the Lion of the sea lifts up
his ancient crown,

And underneath his deadly paw treads
the gay lilies down.

So stalked he when he turned to flight,
on that famed Picard field,

Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow,
and Cæsar's eagle shield.

So glared he when at Agincourt in
wrath he turned to bay,

And crushed and torn beneath his
claws the princely hunters lay.

Ho! strike the flag-staff deep, Sir
Knight: ho! scatter flowers, fair
maids:

Ho ! gunners, fire a loud salute : ho !
gallants, draw your blades :
Thou sun, shine on her joyously ; ye
breezes, waft her wide ;
Our glorious SEMPER EADEM, the ban-
ner of our pride.

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled
that banner's massy fold ;
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed
that haughty scroll of gold ;
Night sank upon the dusky beach, and
on the purple sea,
Such night in England ne'er had been,
nor e'er again shall be.
From Eddystone to Berwick bounds,
from Lynn to Milford Bay,
That time of slumber was as bright
and busy as the day ;
For swift to east and swift to west the
ghastly war-fame spread,

High on St. Michael's Mount it shone :
it shone on Beachy Head.

Far on the deep the Spaniard saw,
along each southern shire,

Cape beyond cape, in endless range,
those twinkling points of fire.

The fisher left his skiff to rock on
Tamar's glittering waves :

The rugged miners poured to war from
Mendip's sunless caves !

O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cran-
bourne's oaks, the fiery herald
flew :

He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge,
the rangers of Beaulieu.

Right sharp and quick the bells all
night rang out from Bristol town,

And ere the day three hundred horse
had met on Clifton down ;

The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked
forth into the night.

And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill
the streak of blood-red light,
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar
the deathlike silence broke,
And with one start, and with one cry,
the royal city woke.
At once on all her stately gates arose the
answering fires ;
At once the wild alarum clashed from
all her reeling spires ;
From all the batteries of the Tower
pealed loud the voice of fear ;
And all the thousand masts of Thames
sent back a louder cheer ;
And from the furthest wards was
heard the rush of hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and
flags rushed down each roaring
street ;
And broader still became the blaze, and
louder still the din,

As fast from every village round the
horse came spurring in :

And eastward straight from wild
Blackheath the warlike errand
went,

And roused in many an ancient hall the
gallant squires of Kent.

Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills
flew those bright couriers forth ;

High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy
moor they started for the north ;

And on, and on, without a pause, un-
tired they bounded still :

All night from tower to tower they
sprang: they sprang from hill to hill :

Till the proud peak unfurled the flag
o'er Darwin's rocky dales.

Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the
stormy hills of Wales,

Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze
on Malvern's lonely height.

Till streamed in crimson on the wind
the Wrekin's crest of light,
Till broad and fierce the light came
forth on Ely's stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er
all the boundless plain ;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign
to Lincoln sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er
the wide vale of Trent ;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned
on Gaunt's embattled pile,
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused
the burghers of Carlisle.

.

1832.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY,

BY OBADIAH BIND - THEIR - KINGS - IN -
CHAINS - AND - THEIR - NOBLES - WITH
LINKS-OF-IRON, SERGEANT IN IRE-
TON'S REGIMENT. (1824.)

Oh! wherefore come ye forth, in
triumph from the North,
With your hands, and your feet, and
your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send
forth a joyous shout?
And whence be the grapes of the
wine-press which ye tread?
Oh, evil was the root, and bitter was
the fruit,
And crimson was the juice of the
vintage that we trod:

For we trampled on the throng of the
haughty and the strong,

Who sate in the high places, and
slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious
day of June,

That we saw their banners dance, and
their cuirasses shine,

And the Man of Blood was there, with
his long essenced hair,

And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke,
and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his
Bible and his sword,

The General rode along us to form
us to the fight,

When a murmuring sound broke out,
and swell'd into a shout,

Among the godless horsemen upon
the tyrant's right.

266 BATTLE OF NASEBY.

And hark ! like the roar of the billows
on the shore,

The cry of battle rises along their
charging line !

For God ! for the Cause ! for the
Church ! for the Laws !

For Charles King of England and
Rupert of the Rhine !

The furious German comes, with his
clarions and his drums,

His bravoës of Alsatia, and pages
of Whitehall ;

They are bursting on our flanks. Grasp
your pikes, close your ranks ;

For Rupert never comes but to con-
quer or to fall.

They are here ! They rush on ! We
are broken ! We are gone !

Our left is borne before them like
stubble on the blast.

O Lord, put forth thy might ! O Lord,
defend the right !

Stand back to back, in God's name,
and fight it to the last.

Stout Skippon hath a wound ; the centre
hath given ground :

Hark ! hark ! — What means the
trampling of horsemen on our rear ?

Whose banner do I see, boys ? 'Tis he,
thank God, 'tis he, boys,

Bear up another minute : brave
Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their
points all in a row,

Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a
deluge on the dykes,

Our cuirassiers have burst on the
ranks of the accurst,

And at a shock have scattered the
forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some
safe nook to hide

Their coward heads, predestined to
rot on Temple Bar ;

And he—he turns ; he flies :—shame on
those cruel eyes

That bore to look on torture, and
dare not look on war.

Ho ! comrades, scour the plain : and,
ere ye strip the slain,

First give another stab to make
your search secure,

Then shake from sleeves and pockets
their broad-pieces and lockets,

The tokens of the wanton, the plunder
of the poor.

Fools ! your doublets shone with gold,
and your hearts were gay and bold,

When you kissed your lily hands to
your lemans to-day ;

And to-morrow shall the fox, from her
 chamber in the rocks,
 Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl
 above the prey.

Where be your tongues that late mocked
 at heaven and hell and fate,
 And the fingers that once were so
 busy with your blades,
 Your perfum'd satin clothes, your
 catches and your oaths,
 Your stage plays and your sonnets,
 your diamonds and your spades ?

Down, down, for ever down with the
 mitre and the crown,
 With the Belial of the Court and the
 Mammon of the Pope ;
 There is woe in Oxford halls : there is
 wail in Durham's Stalls :
 The Jesuit smites his bosom : the
 Bishop rends his cope.

And She of the seven hills shall mourn
her children's ills,

And tremble when she thinks on the
edge of England's sword :

And the Kings of earth in fear shall
shudder when they hear

What the hand of God hath wrought
for the Houses and the Word.

SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD.

(1825.)

LET pious Damon take his seat,
With mincing step and languid smile,
And scatter from his 'kerchief sweet,
Sabæan odours o'er the aisle ;
And spread his little jewelled hand,
And smile round all the parish
beauties,
And pat his curls, and smooth his band,
Meet prelude to his saintly duties.

Let the thronged audience press and
stare,

Let stifled maidens ply the fan,
Admire his doctrines, and his hair,
And whisper, ' What a good young
man ! '

272 SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD.

While he explains what seems most clear,
So clearly that it seems perplexed,
I'll stay and read my sermon here ;
And skulls, and bones, shall be the
text.

Art thou the jilted dupe of fame ?
Dost thou with jealous anger pine
Whene'er she sounds some other name,
With fonder emphasis than thine ?
To thee I preach ; draw near ; attend !
Look on these bones, thou fool, and
see
Where all her scorns and favours end,
What Byron is, and thou must be.

Dost thou revere, or praise, or trust
Some clod like those that here we
spurn ;
Some thing that sprang like thee from
dust,
And shall like thee to dust return ?

SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD. 273

Dost thou rate statesmen, heroes, wits,
At one sear leaf, or wandering
feather ?

Behold the black, damp, narrow pits,
Where they and thou must lie to-
gether.

Dost thou beneath the smile or frown
Of some vain woman bend thy knee ?
Here take thy stand, and trample down
Things that were once as fair as she.
Here rave of her ten thousand graces,
Bosom, and lip, and eye, and chin,
While, as in scorn, the fleshless faces
Of Hamiltons and Waldegraves grin.

Whate'er thy losses or thy gains,
Whate'er thy projects or thy fears,
Whate'er the joys, whate'er the pains,
That prompt thy baby smiles and
tears ;

274 SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD.

Come to my school, and thou shalt
learn,

In one short hour of placid thought,
A stoicism, more deep, more stern,
Than ever Zeno's porch hath taught.

The plots and feats of those that
press

To seize on titles, wealth, or power,
Shall seem to thee a game of chess,

Devised to pass a tedious hour.
What matters it to him who fights
For shows of unsubstantial good,
Whether his Kings, and Queens, and
Knights,
Be things of flesh, or things of wood ?

We check, and take ; exult, and fret ;
Our plans extend, our passions rise,
Till in our ardour we forget

How worthless is the victor's prize.

SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD. 275

Soon fades the spell, soon comes the
night :

Say will it not be then the same,
Whether we played the black or white,
Whether we lost or won the game ?

Dost thou among these hillocks stray,
O'er some dear idol's tomb to moan ?

Know that thy foot is on the clay
Of hearts once wretched as thy own.

How many a father's anxious schemes,
How many rapturous thoughts of
lovers,

How many a mother's cherished dreams,
The swelling turf before thee covers !

Here for the living, and the dead,
The weepers and the friends they weep,
Hath been ordained the same cold bed,
The same dark night, the same long
sleep ;

276 SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD.

Why shouldest thou writhe, and sob,
and rave

O'er those with whom thou soon
must be ?

Death his own sting shall cure—the
grave

Shall vanquish its own victory.

Here learn that all the griefs and
joys,

Which now torment, which now
beguile,

Are children's hurts, and children's
toys,

Scarce worthy of one bitter smile.

Here learn that pulpit, throne, and
press,

Sword, sceptre, lyre, alike are
frail.

That science is a blind man's guess,
And History a nurse's tale.

SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD. 277

Here learn that glory and disgrace,
 Wisdom and folly, pass away,
That mirth hath its appointed space,
 That sorrow is but for a day ;
That all we love, and all we hate,
 That all we hope, and all we fear,
Each mood of mind, each turn of fate,
 Must end in dust and silence here.

EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE.

(1845.)

To my true king I offered free from
stain

Courage and faith; vain faith, and
courage vain.

For him, I threw lands, honours,
wealth, away,

And one dear hope, that was more
prized than they.

For him I languished in a foreign
clime,

Grey-haired with sorrow in my man-
hood's prime;

EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE. 279

Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering
trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier
Tees ;
Beheld each night my home in fevered
sleep,
Each morning started from the dream
to weep ;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely,
gave
The resting place I asked, an early
grave.
Oh thou, whom chance leads to this
nameless stone,
From that proud country which was
once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must
see,
By that dear language which I spake
like thee,

280 EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE.

Forget all feuds, and shed one English
tear

O'er English dust. A broken heart lies
here.

THE END.

ESTABLISHED 1798



T. NELSON
AND SONS
PRINTERS AND
PUBLISHERS

THE NELSON CLASSICS.

Uniform with this Volume and Same Price.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ON SOME OF THE
VOLUMES.

The Woman in White. WILKIE COLLINS.

Westward Ho! CHARLES KINGSLEY.

This is the best novel ever written on the greatest age of English adventure. It is a saga of the Devonshire sailors who, like Drake, sailed to the unknown to found an empire for their queen, "as good as any which his Majesty of Spain had." The story swings from start to close at a breathless pace.

Hypatia. CHARLES KINGSLEY.

No difference could be greater than that between the stirring times of Elizabeth and that of Alexandria in the fifth century, when the world was occupied with barren ecclesiastical strife. Hypatia, the last defender of the pagan faith, is a wonderful study, and the whole book is a brilliant picture of the passing of the old faiths of Greece and Rome.

The Old Lieutenant and his Son. NORMAN MACLEOD.

Bret Harte once said of Dr. Norman Macleod's stories that they stood alone in literature. "The Old Lieutenant" gives us fascinating glimpses of life in a Scottish west-country village, and reveals the author's robust humour, wholesome philosophy, and true humanity.

David Copperfield—I.

CHARLES DICKENS.

David Copperfield—II.

CHARLES DICKENS.

"David Copperfield" is, by general consent, Dickens's masterpiece, showing, as it does, all his peculiar merits in their highest form. It is the most autobiographical of his novels, and the one into which he put most of his philosophy of life.

Jane Eyre.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

"Jane Eyre" is Charlotte Brontë's first and most famous work. It was the first realistic novel, in the modern sense of the word, in English literature, and its influence has been beyond reckoning. It ranks as one of the great novels of the nineteenth century.

Verdant Green.

CUTHBERT BEDE.

This is the humorous classic of Oxford life. Published more than half a century ago, its humor is as fresh to-day as ever.

Pickwick Papers—I.

CHARLES DICKENS.

Pickwick Papers—II.

CHARLES DICKENS.

Every year sees a new edition of "Pickwick," and the world still asks for more. It is one of the world's greatest romances of the road, where adventures fall to those who seek them. It is also a faithful and loving picture of an older England, from which we have travelled far to-day. We may become a wiser people, but we shall never again be so humorous.

Windsor Castle.

HARRISON AINSWORTH.

The romances of Harrison Ainsworth need no advertisement. In this, as in his "Tower of London" and "Old St. Paul's," he has taken one of England's great historical sites, and woven around it an appropriate romance.

Peg Woffington.

CHARLES READE.

"Peg Woffington" was the first of Charles Reade's romances, and was founded upon his comedy, "Masks and Faces." The story of the famous Irish actress who dazzled London in the eighteenth century, and with whom Garrick was in love, has been made the foundation of a charming romance.

Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character.

Dean RAMSAY.

The only book of jests that has ever attained an honourable place in literature. Its wealth of genuine humour is a perpetual refutation of the old slander that Scots joke "wi' deeficulty."

Parables from Nature.

Mrs. GATTY.

This is one of the great children's books of the world. It was a classic in our grandmothers' time, and possesses that imperishable charm which makes it as attractive to-day as when it was first written.

Lavengro.

GEORGE BORROW.

The greatest romance of the road in English literature, telling of all the byways and humours of that older England which is fast disappearing.

Little Women.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

This delightful book has become a possession of childhood and youth. It has captured the affections of millions of young people in two continents, and is certainly the finest piece of work in the whole range of Miss Alcott's breezy, hopeful, genial, and tender writings.

Pride and Prejudice.

JANE AUSTEN.

Sense and Sensibility.

JANE AUSTEN.

Sir Walter Scott was among the earliest to detect the merits of Miss Austen's work, and of recent years her humour and her keen insight into human nature have been abundantly recognized, so that to-day she is probably the most read novelist of her period. In Sir Walter Scott's phrase she possesses "the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting."

Toilers of the Sea.

VICTOR HUGO.

The Laughing Man.

VICTOR HUGO.

Les Misérables—I.

VICTOR HUGO.

Les Misérables—II.

VICTOR HUGO.

'Ninety-Three.

VICTOR HUGO.

Victor Hugo took the romantic novel as invented by Sir Walter Scott and gave it a new and palatable interest. All his great romances have a purpose. "Les Misérables" exposes the tyranny of human laws; "The Toilers of the Sea" shows the conflict of man with nature; "The Laughing Man" expounds the tyranny of the aristocratic class as exemplified in England. But being a great artist as well as a great thinker, he never turned his romances into pamphlets. Drama is always his aim, and no novelist has attained more often the supreme dramatic moment.

The Heir of Redclyffe.

C. M. YONGE.

This is a reprint of Miss Yonge's most famous tale. It has been said of her that she domesticated the historical romance, which owed its origin to Sir Walter Scott, and her characters were for long the ideal figures of most English households.

Wild Wales.

GEORGE BORROW.

This book was the result of Borrow's wanderings after the publication of "Lavengro" and "The Rotherby Kye." He tramped on foot throughout the country, and the work is a classic of description, both of the scenery and people.

The Cloister and the Hearth.

CHARLES READE.

There are many who think this the greatest of all historical novels, and it is certain that there are few better. It is not a story so much as a vast and varied transcript of life. It is also a delightful romance, and Gerard and Margaret are among the immortals of fiction.

Romola.

GEORGE ELIOT.

This is the only novel of George Eliot's in which the scene is laid outside her own country. It is a story of Florence during the time of the Renaissance—a marvellous picture of the intellectual and moral ferment which the New Learning created. With amazing learning and insight the author portrays the souls of men and women, and her study of a weak man and a strong woman has rarely been surpassed in English literature for dramatic power and moral truth.

Silas Marner.

GEORGE ELIOT.

This, the shortest and the most exquisite of George Eliot's tales, represents her great powers at their best. In the picture of the hero she shows a profound understanding of human nature, and the feelings which were then moving rural and industrial England.

The Abbot.

Sir WALTER SCOTT.

One of the Waverley novels which has always been deservedly popular.

Bride of Lammermoor.

Sir WALTER SCOTT.

The story is a tragedy on the lines of Greek drama, and the ending has been pronounced by great critics to be the most moving in prose literature. In the Master of Ravenswood, Scott has drawn perhaps his greatest tragic figure, and in Caleb Balderstone one of his most humorous creations.

The Black Tulip.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

This was the last of Dumas's great stories. It is a veritable *tour de force*, for in it the reader follows with consuming interest the vicissitudes of a tulip, and the human element in the story is quite subsidiary. Nevertheless, it contains such strongly-drawn characters as Cornelius van Baerle, the guardian of the tulip, and Rosa, the jailer's daughter.

Tom Cringle's Log.

MICHAEL SCOTT.

A brilliant story of West Indian life by an author who combined abundant personal experience with keen observation, sprightly temper, and delightful humour. "Tom Cringle's Log" has been many times reprinted, and has lost nothing of its popularity and power to please.

Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare.

Tens of thousands of readers have been led to Shakespeare by the charmingly told stories which Charles and Mary Lamb, about a hundred years ago, extracted from the plays of the greatest dramatist of all time. Though produced by Lamb at the very outset of his literary career, these stories betray that unique and finished art, that delightful freshness and rare sympathy, which are the characteristics of his mature work.

The Scarlet Letter.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

This is one of the most powerful and affecting stories ever conceived. On its first appearance, in 1850, it immediately leaped high into public favour, and attained the distinction of an unmistakable classic. The tragedy of Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale is wrought out in the midst of an austere Puritan community, which exacts the bitterest expiation for sin.

Tales of Mystery.

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

Marguerite de Valois.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

This is the first of Dumas's great "Valois Romances," which tell of the troubled history of France at the end of the sixteenth century. It contains famous descriptions of the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the murder of Coligny.

John Halifax, Gentleman.

MRS. CHAIR.

A simple and excellent study of one who lived up to the standard of truth and honour and courtesy which an earlier age defined by the word "gentleman." One of the most popular of novels.

Emerson's Essays.

This is a new selection of Emerson's chief Essays and Lectures, giving specimens of his most characteristic work. Emerson has long been ranked as one of the greatest teachers of the nineteenth century, and there is no more stimulating and illuminating writer.

The cheapest books in the world. Produced in the same excellent form and convenient size as the other Nelson Libraries, they are even cheaper, because they contain works which are out of copyright. Full List on application.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS,

London, Edinburgh, Dublin, New York, Paris and Leipzig.

PR
4963
A7
1908

Macaulay, Thomas Babington
Macaulay, 1st baron
Lays of ancient Rome

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

WALLACE ROOM

